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THE BLACK HEBREWS

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY
INTO THE PROBLEM OF
THE BLACK HEBREWS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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Jerusalem, June 1980

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COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE PROBLEM OF THE "BLACK HEBREW" SECT

To
Dr. Yosef Burg
Minister of the Interior
Jerusalem

Jerusalem, June 13, 1980

Sir,

On Sunday, August 4, 1978, by recommendation of the Knesset Committee for the Interior and Quality of the Environment, you appointed the undersigned to serve as a Committee of Inquiry into the problem of the "Black Hebrew" sect.

We have the honor to present herewith the Committee's Report and Recommendations which were adopted unanimously. Adjoined to the Report are documents which are partly classified.

We regret the delay in presenting the Report on grounds set forth in the Report.

We thank the Ministry of the Interior for its help in the work of the Committee, and more especially Ms. Hannah Rothenstein who served as Secretary to the Committee.

Yours, etc.

David Glas
Chairman

Arye Meir
Member

Zvi Tzilker
Member

Zeev Katzenelenbogen
Member

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PART I

a. INTRODUCTION

On the recommendation of the Knesset Committee for the Interior and Quality of the Environment, the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Yosef Burg, on August 4, 1978, appointed a Committee of Inquiry into the Problem of the "Black Hebrews".

The Committee, composed of MK David Glas (chairman), Mr. Arye Meir, Mr. Zvi Tzilker and Mr. Zeev Katzenelenbogen, was required within the terms of the appointment to examine ^{the} problem overall, including:

1. The legal ^{status} ~~status~~ of their sojourn in the country;
2. Their mode of living and employment;
3. Relations with their neighbors.

The Committee was required to submit to the Minister of the Interior recommendations for possible solutions concerning their future and ways of tackling them.

The Committee held numerous sessions and toured the localities where the "Black Hebrews" have taken up residence. Appearing before the Committee were representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Religions, the Ministry of Housing and Construction, the Israel Police Force, the Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, heads of the local authorities in Dimona, Arad and Mitzne Ramon and members of the Council, public figures and functionaries in these areas, local residents and leaders of the "Black Hebrew" sect. In all, the Committee heard the views and the testimony of 55 persons, mostly representatives of the major

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Jewish organizations in the USA and representatives of the "Black Hebrews" in the USA:-

The Committee studied comprehensive background material, researches, surveys, reports, press clippings and other relevant matter.

The Committee owes thanks to all sources, institutions and persons who helped in the fulfilment of its task.

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b. THE IDEOLOGY

The background to the emergence of the "Black Hebrew" sect is a crisis of identity and ^A"where-do-we-go-from-here"-bewilderment which grew more acute among the Black community in the USA at the beginning of the present century. Given their difficult economic situation, their social and cultural inferiority and ^{the} racial discriminations afflicting them, many of them sought refuge in all manner of religious sects and movements.

The number of these sects kept increasing and ~~some three thousand~~ ^{are largely composed of Blacks} some three thousand religious and pseudo-religious sects currently extant in the USA, for the most part ghetto-dwellers in the ^{big} cities. At the end of the First World War there appeared in the Harlem quarter of New York ^{some} small groups of Blacks who started calling themselves Jews. None of these sects could ^{evince} ~~show~~ any historical link with the Jewish people, and their members also believed in Jesus. They adopted some of the Jewish customs, celebrated certain Jewish festivals and laid particular stress on the Passover feast. Emissaries of these groups reached Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington and Cincinnati. ^{In this manner,} ~~there also~~ ^{there} arose also the "Black Hebrew" sect in Chicago.

THE LINK TO JUDAISM

The fact that members of the Black community ^{opted,} ~~have~~ of all things, to attach themselves to the Jewish people, ^{has been} ~~was~~ the subject of ^{several} ~~many~~ research papers. It is not our concern to ^{engage in} ~~do~~ historical-cum-sociological-cum psychological analysis in depth, but we do

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accept the conclusion reached by Dr. Israel Gerber in his book, "The Heritage Seekers," which links this phenomenon with the search of the Black man in America for his identity and his roots. Some members of this community saw and continue to see in the Christian religious establishment in the USA the ~~center~~^{intrusion} of the "White man" center-stage. In their search for a (different) faith and tradition they grasped at Judaism as an ancient religion which bestowed on the civilized world ^{the} basic values of religion and ~~ethics~~^{ethics} ~~morality~~. The Old Testament books on which they had been reared from childhood upward inflamed their imagination and it was easy for them to identify with the people who went out of Egypt from bondage into freedom.

To belong to the Jewish people was to acquire a feeling of status, ~~an~~ ^{a sense of} historical heritage, of identity and self-pride - values to which they aspired in their distress.

The number of Blacks identifying themselves as Jews in the United States is not known. Opinions as to their number differ drastically, ^{varying} ~~between~~ between 15,000 and 100,000 men and women.

The various communities of Black Jews differ in ^{their} outlook and in their customs. ^{As to ideology,} ~~The~~ organ, "Christianity Today", distinguishes three categories: ~~regarding ideology~~

- a. The group which espouses ^{the} Return to Israel as an ideological ^{albeit} ~~but~~ remote aim;
- b. The group which ^{regards} ~~views~~ its sons as true Jews, ^{yet} ~~but~~ believes in Jesus as God's prophet;
- c. The group which ^{favours} ~~seeks~~ instant Return to the Land of Israel where - and nowhere else - ~~is~~ its messianic

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~~can be fulfilled~~ ^{styling} This group ~~itself~~

"Black Israelites," "Black Hebrews" or "The Original Hebrew-Israelite Nation", is the sect preoccupying ~~the~~ our Committee.

We shall hereafter use the term "Black Hebrews" as applied by the public at large in Israel to the "returnees".

HISTORY OF THE SECT

The story of the "Black Hebrew" sect in its present set-up is the story of its unchallenged leader Ben-Ami Carter. Carter was born in Chicago in 1939 and in his young days was a bus driver. In 1960 he began to take an interest in Judaism after - as he ~~avert~~ ^{proclaiming} ~~would have~~ - hearing a voice from heaven ~~proclaiming~~ his election by the Almighty as the one chosen to take his people out of bondage into freedom. He took up Tora with two Black "rabbis", Levi Israel and ^{Levi's} ~~his~~ father Reuben. The latter, Carter claims, ordained him a "rabbi" in 1961 and also gave him his Hebrew name. Ben-Ami. In 1963 he became the leader of the group which for several years ^{held regular meetings} ~~held regular meetings~~ in a place called Alpha Beta Israel Hebrew Center.

The group ^{styled} ~~itself~~ itself "Sons of the Elder Minister of Peace," an allusion to their being, as they would have it, descendants of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That year this group merged with another group called "ONE", established in the State of Illinois and whose declared aim was "recognition of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and their history, and restoration of human dignity to their descendants." Its members, too, unreservedly accepted the leadership of Carter whom they called

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"Father", "Counsellor" and "Teacher of Justice".

In contrast with other Black groups in Chicago, which cooperated with the ^{local} Jewish community ~~there~~ and to this end even set up in 1967 an organization ^{by the name of} ~~the~~ United Leadership Council of Hebrew (ULCHI) Israelites, Carter's group had no contact with Jewish bodies in the city beyond its various attempts to raise funds from the Jewish community for divers purposes of the sect.

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE SECT

The "Black Hebrews" claim to be the genuine Jews, ~~the~~ direct Kinsmen ^{of} ~~the~~ the Patriarchs. They say they are the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes, the ancient Hebrews, who for their sins were fated to suffer exile from the Land of Israel and wander to West Africa, whence they were abducted and sold into slavery on the American markets.

Whereas the "Black Hebrews" deem themselves the "eternal Children of God," they look upon the Jewish people in its present form as the offspring of people whose rulers ^{- the Khazars -} compelled them to convert. ^{Down the ages these converts were then} ~~the Khazars and who were~~ joined by a medley of other European peoples, ~~down the ages~~. (On occasion, however, the leaders of the sect proffer another version conceding that the Jewish people are, as indicated by their name, indeed the offspring of a Jewish tribe).

The "Black Hebrews" believe that after having paid for their sins ⁱⁿ the United States, ~~the~~ which they call "New Babylon" - the Blacks are summoned by the spirit of prophecy to return to the land of their historic origins, Israel, which has been unjustly

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appropriated by the Jewish people ^{which has} ~~stolen~~ the history, the culture and the language of the true Hebrews and ^{has} settled into their country. At best, the Zionists are mere "trustees" and the time has come to restore the "deposit" to its legal owners. The "Black Hebrews" do not envision the Return to Zion of their adherents alone, whose number in Israel and overseas does not exceed several thousands, but seek to redeem all the Blacks in the world of their distress by bringing them ~~into~~ into Israel. From this point of view, the sect ^{considers} ~~itself~~ itself ~~as~~ a bridge-head for all the Blacks who will pour in en masse, in order, among other things, to escape the horror of the "Day of Judgement" in which America will be totally devastated. ~~Two~~ (Two predestined dates for the holocaust, the months of September and December 1977 have meanwhile passed without a fresh date for the "Day of Judgement" ^{being} ~~being~~ fixed by Carter).

Here in Israel, contend Carter and his followers, the end-of-days vision of the "Nation" (as the sect styles itself) will come to ^{fruition,} ~~fruition~~ with Ben-Ami Carter as its Messiah and Savior.

THE PRACTICAL COMMANDMENTS

The "Black Hebrews" claim to believe only in the biblical commandments and do not recognize the oral traditions of Tora and Talmud. Discernible in ^{many of} the religious rites performed by the sect is the strong influence of the fundamentalist churches to which most of them belonged before organizing themselves into "Black Hebrews."

The members of the sect fast from the onset to the end of the Sabbath. Sabbath prayer consists of readings from the Bible,

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songs and sermons by Carter. In this fashion they also observe what they deem to be the "main festivals" of Israel, ignoring what they consider the "lesser" ones. According to testimony heard by the Committee, but which could not be authenticated, the "Black Hebrews" also celebrate festivals common to a ^{miscellany} ~~some~~ of religious communities; according to this same source, ^{some four years ago} the members of the sect celebrated the Moslem festival of the Sacrifice in Dimona, ~~some four years ago~~.

Some of the men and women wear fringes resembling small prayer-shawls after the Israeli style. The members of the sect circumcize their sons on the eighth day after birth, but not by a ritual circumcizer.

In matters of personal status, they practise polygamy, the male being permitted to marry several women. Carter says that ~~by~~ the laws of the Tora ^{allow} every male ^{to} have up to seven wives. The status of women in the sect is inferior to that of the men; they are not allowed to sit in the company of ^{men folk} ~~men~~ and ~~they~~ are forbidden to speak ~~first~~ before being ^{first} addressed by the men ~~men~~. The primary function of the woman is to give birth to children and rear them in the spirit of the sect.

// Marriages and divorces are performed by order of Ben-Ami Carter without any particular ceremonies. Apparently, divorces take the form of an announcement of separation in the presence of two witnesses; no written "divorce" document of any kind is \\ required.

The "Black Hebrews" claim that the Tora ordains strict observance of a special diet. Thus they refrain from eating

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meat and fish and even dairy products. They neither smoke nor drink alcoholic beverages. Cinema-going and watching TV are deemed a desecration and waste of time.

THE JEWISHNESS OF THE "BLACK HEBREWS"

The question of the Jewishness of the "Black Hebrews" is to us of prime interest, for the members of the sect have put forward and continue to press the demand that they be recognized by the State of Israel as Jews in all respects and that the Law of Return be applied to them with all that this signifies in determining their status in the country.

When the first group of six members of the sect arrived in Israel in the spring of 1969, the Ministry of the Interior asked Rabbi Hanania Dari to examine their claim to be Jews qualifying for aliya (immigration) certificates under the Law of Return.

~~After~~ ^{investigation} After ~~investigation~~ and conversations with them, it ^{very} soon became obvious to Rabbi Dari that there was no foundation to their claim and he tried to influence them ^{into} ~~to~~ accept ^{ing} conversion. The members of the sect acquiesced, and conversion files were opened in the rabbinical courts; but when Carter came to the country in March 1970 at the head of a group of 49 ^{members} ~~men~~ of the sect he rejected absolutely the notion of conversion. He argued that such an act would be tantamount to an admission of non-Jewishness ^{on the part of} ~~the~~ the "Black Hebrews," and this he would not brook ^{in any circumstances} ~~under any circumstances~~.

There ~~was~~ ^{was} never ^{are} anything on which to ^{found} ~~base~~ the claim of the "Black Hebrews" that they ~~are~~ ^{are} scions of the Patriarchs. The men of the sect supplied not a shred of evidence to suggest, let alone prove their historical ^{affirmations} ~~assertions~~. In lieu of proof they

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cited various scriptural texts making mention of a black skin, such as: "And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman" (Numbers, 12,1); "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel?" (Amos, 9,7); "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" (The Song of Solomon, 1,5); "My skin is black upon me" (Job, 30, 30).

As already pointed out, a strong Christian influence is discernible in the rites and customs of the sect. Most of the adult members were indeed baptized as Christians and belonged to various churches in the USA, contrary to their claim that they have observed their Jewish tradition from generation to generation after the manner of the Marranos in Spain.

One among many examples of the blend of Christian elements in the sect's faith is to be found in a letter ^{addressed} ~~by~~ by Shelek Ben-Yehuda, vice-president of the community, in July 1978 to Idi Amin, the then ruler of Uganda, wherein he stresses inter alia the principles of the belief in one God who is "the God of Jacob, Noah, David, the apostle Paul and John the Baptist."

At the end of 1972, a group of eight "Black Hebrews," against whom a deportation order had been issued, presented an appeal to the Supreme Court against the Minister of the Interior and the Israel Police Force, with a request for the grant of a Certificate of Aliya under the Law of Return of 1950. As is known, this law, following an amendment introduced in 1970, stipulates that a "Jew" within the terms of the Law of Return is: "whoever was born to a Jewish mother or converted and does not belong to another religion." The appellants claimed that they

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were of the religion of Moses and Israel and eligible to the ^{age} definition of a "Jew". ~~in the law~~

In a declaration signed by "the princes of the community," the leaders of the sect testified that they were the eternal children of Israel to whom this land had been promised, and on the strength of this promise they demanded the exercise of their right to inherit the land of Israel. They regard themselves as the true children of Israel returning to the Promised Land "where for the ^{present} ~~present~~ the ^{current} ~~present~~ State of Israel ~~is~~ ^{is located}

// The Supreme Court totally rejected the sect's claim to Jewishness in the case 482/71 of Oniya Clark v. the Minister of the Interior and others (ruling 27 (1) 113). In the decision handed down it was stated unequivocally that the appellants did not meet the requirements ^{whereby they could} ~~to~~ be defined as "Jewish" under the Law of Return, viz. ~~to~~ have a Jewish mother, or be converted, and as such ~~do not~~ belong to ^{no} ~~a~~ religion other than the Jewish religion. In the words of the Supreme Court (page 199):

"In effect this community ^{is} ~~is~~ a separate sect, distinct from Judaism and remote from the Jewish world, ~~from~~ its traditions and its culture and its heritage down the generations. The claim that they are 'Black Hebrews' is irrelevant. The use of this or another term does not determine the religion or nationality of the members of this sect. Ever since the term 'Jew' was defined in the Law of Return and ⁱⁿ the census register, whoever claims this status or appurtenance to it, is obliged to show proof that he meets the requisite criteria, and this the appellants ^{have} failed to do."

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The conclusions of the Committee concerning the religious and national annurtenance of the "Black Hebrews" are ~~identical to~~ ^{identical to} ~~the~~ ^{straightforward} the aforesaid ~~straightforward~~ ruling.

There is no need to undertake ~~an~~ in-depth historical research ~~study~~ to ^{verify} ~~verify~~ that the "Black Hebrews" have not ~~not ever~~ ^{not ever} ~~had~~ any connection or link with the people of Israel from its inception ^{as a people}. The "religious awakening" which has occurred among members of the sect and given rise to its foundation, even if the sincerity of its motivations is accepted, ~~dates back~~ ^{dates back} ~~beginning not the very earliest in the last few decades~~ no more than a couple of decades at the utriost.

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C. THE IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF
THE BLACK HEBREWS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS.

Emigration to Liberia.

At the beginning of 1967 the idea ripened in the mind of the leader of the "Black Hebrews" sect, Ben-Ami Carter, that his community should leave the U.S. and emigrate to African Continent. After the proposal to choose Abyssinia had been considered and rejected because of various objective difficulties, the choice fell on Liberia. For some time after his arrival in Israel Carter claimed that Liberia had been chosen as a transit country on the way to Israel, following the example of the Children of Israel who wandered about in the desert for forty years before being worthy of entering the Holy Land. However, there is reason to believe that from the start Carter's aim had been to settle his community permanently in Liberia, the ancient Negro State, guided by the motivation of "Liberating the black race from the yoke of the White Man", - a slogan which circulated in the U.S. in the nineteensixties.

Three of the leaders of the sect went as an avant garde on a tour to Liberia, and after they had returned and reported optimistically on the possibilities of settlement in that country, the members of the sect began in July 1967 to go in groups to Liberia. In November of that year their number reached one hundred and sixty. When they arrived, the Liberia Authorities had no idea about the sect or about its aims and plans.

The migrants settled on an agricultural farm not far from Monrovia and tried their strength mainly in agricultural work. However, the

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attempt of absorption failed. Agriculture did not satisfy their needs, their working conditions were difficult, and they came close to the brink of starvation. Nor were their relations with the Authorities any good; at a certain stage an expulsion order was issued against them by the Liberian Minister of Justice, which was cancelled at a later stage by an order of President Tubman. The hard conditions induced part of the members of the sect to return to the U.S., but at the same time additional migrants from the U.S. joined the settlers in Liberia, and at the beginning of 1968 the community numbered one hundred and thirty-seven members.

In the end Carter, after consulting one of the leaders of the sect, Charles Blackwool, came to the decision that the "Black Hebrews" should leave Liberia and settle in Israel. Blackwool received information material about the country from the Israel Embassy in Monrovia, and in the first months of 1968 he and Ben-Ami Carter came as tourists to Israel in order to examine the conditions in this country. It is not known when Carter left Israel and returned to Liberia, but Blackwool remained in this country, changed his name to Hezekiyahu Ben-Israel, and arrived in the Kibbutz "Ein Tzurim", where he remained in the Ulpan (Hebrew Language Seminar) for a short period. Subsequently he joined Kibbutz "Ma'abarot" as a volunteer and remained there for one and a half years, being engaged in carpentry work and supervision of groups of volunteers from abroad. Blackwool, who speaks Hebrew fluently, took an interest in the laws of the State - particularly the "Law of Return" - studied its conditions and customs, and reported on them regularly to the community in Liberia.

The Immigration to Israel.

As a result of Blackwool's enthusiastic reports, two families consisting of five members of the sect arrived in Israel in August 1969.

Under the guidance of Blackwool they applied to the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption which, without any special inquiries or demands, sent them to Arad. The five, together with Blackwool, settled in Arad, received apartments, and found various kinds of work.

On December 21, 1969, there arrived quite suprisingly at Lod Airport a group numbering thirty-nine people, mostly women and children. Blackwool demanded for the members of the group immigrant-visas as Jews, and after some contemplation it was decided to approve their entry as visitors for a period of three months, to grant them a "Cartiss Tipul", (a card which entitles them to be treated as if they were Jewish Immigrants), to give them work permits, and to place at their disposal apartments in Dimona and Arad.

On March 6, 1970, the third wave of immigrants arrived, numbering forty-nine, which included the leader of the sect Ben-Ami Carter. Again the Authorities contemplated on how to treat them, but in the end it was decided to permit their entry, mainly on humanitarian grounds, that the newcomers ought to be enabled to unite, as they claimed, with their families in Israel. The Ministry of Interior granted them entry permits as visitors, but this group - unlike its predecessors - were not granted the aid of the Authorities in their absorption. For that reason the first difficulties and signs of tension became noticeable between them and their Jewish neighbors, particularly because of the crowded housing conditions of the members of the sect - a phenomenon which began to aggravate with the arrival of the third wave of immigrants.

A further group of eleven families arrived at the beginning of 1971 and was absorbed without difficulties, this time at the initiative of the Ministry of Housing, at Mitzpeh Rimon. The number of the

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"Black Hebrews" at the three towns Dimona, Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon reached, according to an estimate of the Ministry of Interior in October 1971, 300 souls.

On October 8, 1971, when a further group of 48 people arrived, they were stopped at Lod Airport and expelled to the U.S. The reaction by the leadership of the sect was the opening of a campaign of slander and accusations against the State, and inter alia a press conference was called by Carter and his friends at which they announced for the first time the principles of their ideology, including their 'ownership' of the State and their intention to take it over "by force, if necessary". In a series of appeals to personages and organizations in Israel and abroad, they accused the Government of Israel of conducting a policy of racial discrimination.

During the years 1970 - 1973 many members of the sect applied to the Ministry of Interior for an extension of the validity of their permits (as temporary residents) in Israel. Their applications were rejected, and they stopped applying. As a result of the infiltration of individuals and groups into Israel which has been going on without respite, and because of the natural multiplication of the members of the sect (it has been pointed out that they practise polygamy) the number of the "Black Hebrews" increased constantly.

The Authorities do not possess exact knowledge of the number of the members of the sect in Israel. The Office of Population Registration does not possess accurate data, both because of the fact that the womenfolk of the sect give birth at their homes and not in hospitals, but also because of the uncontrolled entry into the country of new arrivals joining the sect. According to a cautious estimate one can assess the

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number of the "Black Hebrews" in Israel as being between 1200 and 1400. About 800 of them in Dimona, where they are concentrated in the quarter known as Shekhunat Hanitzahon, about 200 in Arad in Elazar-Ben-Yair street, and about 200 in Mitzpeh Rimon. There are also a number of families living in Beersheba, Eilat, Petah Tiqva, and East Jerusalem (Shekhunat Silwan).

The Relationship with the Neighbors.

The relationship between the "Black Hebrews" and their Jewish neighbors are today characterized by enmity, hostility and mutual suspicion, and has been compared by one community leader of Dimona as "a powder keg, whose fuse is getting shorter all the time".

This is not the way things looked at the beginning, during the first year after the arrival of the sect in Israel. The first groups who arrived in this country were received in Dimona and Arad with friendship, and even with a certain amount of enthusiasm. The Jewish inhabitants of these towns thought that those (Black Hebrews) were, to all intents and purposes, Jews whose skin was black (many people thought they were Falashi-Jews). The local functionaries got vigorously engaged in alleviating the absorption-pains of the newcomers; there were inhabitants who were even proud of the attractive population addition which added color to the routine life in their towns.

An expression of this positive attitude can be seen in the article written by Jacob Ha'elyon "The teacher of justice said no" ("MAARIV" of May 22, 1970), in which the good relations between the "Black Hebrews" and their neighbors are given prominence;

"We do not want there to be any complications, says Ben-Ami Carter, we yearn for one thing, that you should understand that we

love this country, we want to be good citizens, to be friends

with everybody... Their neighbors in the new residential quarter of Dimona agree that this is indeed how they behave. Their manners, politeness, diligence, are beyond reproach. Their women are pleasant and modest. On Independence Day there was a public show by a troupe organized by the "Brothers", and that was one of the most interesting attractions. They sang with enthusiasm "I came back to Jericho", one of the local inhabitants tells us, and we had the feeling that they thought so quite seriously." And elsewhere: "Everyone who comes into contact with them has words of praise for them: industrious, pleasant, neat and tidy, excellent citizens"...

However, the idyllic relations did not last very long; the sign for the deterioration came from Ben Ami Carter a few weeks after his pleasant remarks made in the MAARIV interview had been published.

Immediately after his arrival in the country Carter put an end to the attempts which were made by the Israeli Authorities to solve the "Jewish problem" of the "Black Hebrews" by their proper lawful conversion to Judaism.

Their refusal to be converted - after it had become clear beyond any doubt that the claim of the members of the sect about their being Jews was completely without foundation - blocked the way of the "Black Hebrews" to the right of being recognized as citizens of the State in accordance with the "Law of Return". This had immediate implications from two directions. On the one hand, the Authorities decided not to permit the entry of any further "Black Hebrews" to Israel. On the other hand, the leadership of the sect opened an anti-Israeli propaganda campaign under the erroneous assumption that they would succeed, as a result of local and world public opinion "in bringing the Israel Government to its knees"

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as one leader of the sect put it. The result was quite the opposite. It worked as an eye-opener for many people in Israel, who saw the danger inherent in the presence of that closed sect, with its secrecy, whose members regard themselves as the real lords and masters of the Land of Israel and who regarded the Jewish inhabitants as "Whites, who would be expelled, when the time comes, to the countries of their origin: Germany, Morocco, Poland, etc., in order to make room for the members of the Black Nation" (these words are attributed to one of the leaders of the sect).

At the same time, after any further entry of "Black Hebrews" to Israel had been prohibited, there began a mass infiltration of individuals and groups of members of the sect. The hundreds of newcomers who all arrived and stayed illegally did not, of course, enjoy the privileges of housing and were stuffed by their dozens into the apartments of those who had come before them. The crowded conditions in the apartments became worse and worse, and with them the complaints of the Jewish neighbors about constant noise, clogged sewage pipes, and intolerable sanitary conditions. The escalation of the tension began to take on characteristics of violence. One day about two women of the sect entered the local supermarket, filled their shopping-baskets with goods, and when they were asked to pay refused to do so. Outside the building the men were waiting - and all this in front of the cameras of television networks from the U.S. who had been invited by the leaders of the sect. With difficulty did the police manage to prevent an incident of violence. Carter was in a hurry to accuse the Authorities to the media of "racism against hungry people", and these accusations accompanied by photographs of the event were disseminated in the U.S. (Following this event, the Egyptian Socialist Party proclaimed

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at the time of its convention in Rome the willingness of the Egyptian Government to absorb in Egypt all the "Black Hebrews" who would be expelled from Israel).

The leadership of the sect also initiated a series of trespassing operations and seizure of territories. One group tried to settle near Kibbutz Beth-Kama in the Negev and was evicted by the police. The same thing happened to another group who seized a number of houses in the refugee camp in Jericho. In Dimona itself an attempt was made by them to occupy two apartments earmarked for new immigrants.

All these acts, carried out in combination with a vicious propaganda attack against the Israeli Authorities, aroused hostility against the "Black Hebrews" sect in Dimona and out side it, and it is perhaps no wonder that on this soil of tension there began to sprout pretty soon wild growths of extreme hatred.

When Rabbi Cahane, leader of the "Jewish Defense League" appeared at an assembly in Dimona in the fall of 1971, the hall of the local cinema was packed to capacity. He called the "Black Hebrews": racists, anti-semites, vicious Jew-haters, born criminals and psychopaths, and called for their immediate expulsion from Israel. In one of the articles which appeared about the sect in an Israeli newspaper it was claimed that three hundred residents of Dimona joined Rabbi Cahane's League, after the assembly... 7

Community leaders in Dimona and Arad, worried about the ever deteriorating situation, have begun to "bombard" Government offices with appeals for action to be taken for the solution of the problem. Delegations beleaguered Ministers' offices in Jerusalem. One delegation from Dimona, composed of representatives of the Town Council, the Workers' Council

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and the local Rabbinate, was promised by the Minister of Interior, in September 1971, that the final decision concerning the fate of the "Black Hebrews" would be taken "within a week to ten days"...

The mayor in those days, Israel Navon, said in an interview to MAARIV correspondent Shlomo Givon: "I pray that at long last an authoritative factor will be found in the State that will put an end to this situation and will bring back to Dimona the peace and quiet of days gone by". And one of the tenants of Shekhunat Hanitzahon, the quarter where Jews as well as Blacks live, shouted into the ears of the correspondent: "It is impossible to live like that. I am only asking how long can this situation last?"

At the beginning of 1973, after the Supreme Court had asked the Government in an Order Nisi (Clark) to give favorable consideration to leaving the "Black Hebrews" in Israel there began a certain calming down of relations between them and their neighbors. The militancy of the leadership of the sect, which had found an expression in activism, made room for an explanatory propaganda struggle with the aim of influencing public opinion in Israel and the U.S. The members of the sect were warned by their leaders to be careful in their relations with their neighbors, in order not to give the police any pretext to take them to Court and expel them from the country.

During the Yom Kippur War and thereafter an effort was made by the sect to demonstrate solidarity with the State and the IDF. An ensemble set up by the members of the sect "Envoys of the Soul", appeared in shows in military units and bases, and was received with enthusiasm, as borne out by letters of thanks written to it.

One letter written from a Military Hospital reads, inter alia:

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"Dear Brothers, we would like to thank you and express our full appreciation, on behalf of the soldiers laid up in the Beersheba Hospital, for your exciting appearance on the eve of Hanukka. This show, which was given by you on a voluntary basis, the songs, melodies and wonderful dances, raised the morale of the wounded who were unable to celebrate the Hanukka feast with their families at home"...

Soldiers of a fighting unit in Sinai, after thanking the troupe for a gratifying and enjoyable evening", conclude with the expression of hope "May God multiply the likes of you in Israel!"

However, pretty soon the tension returned and rose, and the atmosphere of suspicion and hostility between the "Black Hebrews" and the inhabitants of the towns in which they lived again flared up. The increasing numbers of the members of the sect as a result of illegal immigration and large natural increase, and their concentration in small living-space under extremely crowded conditions which became intolerable led to it that inhabitants in their residential quarters sold their apartments at a loss, (or were prepared to sell them at a loss), only they could not find any buyers, even at greatly reduced prices far below market value. Having no alternative, the Jewish inhabitants continue to live where they are, with profound feelings of frustration, which in the course of years have developed into hostile relations and open hatred and enmity towards the "Black Hebrews".

From testimony given before the Commission, and from written and verbal applications and appeals to the various Authorities one can get the impression of these phenomena which in themselves are very grave indeed. One can understand the distress of the Jewish inhabitants, but it

is difficult to justify, even under these circumstances, baseless slander voiced against "Black Hebrews", which has the well-known ugly ring of anti-semitic slander against Jews in the diaspora.

We find it necessary to warn against this phenomenon, which has no place in the Jewish State, many of whose inhabitants were personal victims of an attitude of that kind. On no account must we acquiesce in the things which were voiced before the Commission by a respectable public figure in Dimona, accord to which "all the Black Hebrews ought to be put on a ship and sunk in the high seas". Indeed, this was a singular and perverse expression, but even so, it is prohibitive that things like that should be voiced in our country.

Some inhabitants claimed that the members of the sect had sexual relations quite openly in staircases and this constituted a danger "to young Jewish girls", but none of them could point out one single case as proof of the first claim, nor could anyone remember a single case of assault against a young Jewish girl.

Also the complaints about "the food which exudes unbearable smells", "strange voices during prayer", etc. contained more than a hint of slander as did the complaints about pollution, dirt and public nuisance as being characteristic of the "Black Hebrews".

At the same time, objectively speaking, there is no doubt that the situation of joint residence under horribly crowded conditions of two kinds of public, one of which maintains a communal framework to which Israelis are not accustomed, justifies the claim of the public committee of the "Nitzahon" quarter in Dimona in its letter to the Mayor of Dimona, dated October 21, 1976: "The problem works as a time-bomb, and there is no justification for it that one residential quarter should carry the entire burden".

And in another letter to the Minister of Interior, dated November 29, 1976 by the Mayor, the Town Rabbi, and the Secretary of the Workers' Council of Dimona, they warn: "This situation can't go on, and if anything anomalous or a mishap should occur in our town on this subject, we regard you and the Israel Government as directly responsible on this issue. We hope that the Government will have the courage to take purposeful decisions for the solution of the problem which, as said before, has been lasting for about six years."

And so, one cannot help but add to the score of grave consequences caused by the shortcomings of the Government in dealing with the problem of the "Black Hebrews" also the disturbed relations between them and their Jewish neighbors, an expression of which has been given in the above-mentioned letter by the Committee of "Shekhunat Hanitzhon" quarter: "Instead of relations of good neighborliness and affection there exist estrangement, enmity, distrust, fear, and lack of communication."

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D. STRUCTURE OF THE SECT.

The sect of the "Black Hebrews" is formally led by twelve "Princes" according to the number of the tribes of Israel. In practise the leadership consists today of ten men, viz:

1. The President, Ben-Ami Israel (formerly Ben Carter).
2. Vice President Shalik (Shaliah) Ben Yehuda (formerly Lewis Joe Briant).
3. Vice President Bahuria Ben Israel (formerly Trevis Moor).
4. Vice President Eliyahu Ben Israel (formerly Rona'd Ross).
5. Gabriel Ben Israel (formerly William Butler).
6. Seymour Ben Israel (formerly I. Inches).
7. Hezekiyahu Ben Israel (formerly Charles Blackwool).

8. "Little" Gabriel (formerly Gordon Darwin).
9. Avshalom Ben Israel (formerly Roosevelt Pointer).
10. Amram Ben Israel (his former name is not known).

(All members of the sect changed their former names into Hebrew, because they regard their former names as "marks of Cain, stuck onto them when they were slaves, by their white masters).

The two large concentrations of the sect - except for the Dimona community which is led by Carter - have local leaders; in Be'er Sheva it is Charles Blackwood, and in Mitzpeh Rimon it is William Butler (Gabriel Ben Israel, or "Big" Gabriel, as distinct from "Little" Gabriel, who is also one of the leaders of the sect).

In the Council of Princes there function men who hold various posts on behalf of the "Nation", like Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shalik Ben Yehuda, who is regarded as No.2 in the hierarchy after Carter; Defense Minister who is in charge of internal security; Minister of Justice, who is responsible for internal jurisdiction; Minister of Education (a woman) who administers the schools for the children of the sect, and a Finance Minister who is responsible for the financial administration.

Carter - an Autocrat.

The impression which might be created towards the outside world, that the sect is administered collectively by the Council of Princes is erroneous. Ben-Ami Carter is the omnipotent Leader, and he is implicitly obeyed in all matters, big and small. The members of his sect call him "Ben-Ami Israel", "President of Presidents", "Father", or "Our Lord". They bow to him when they pass him, and what he says is sacred to the members of the sect. He also decides who will marry whom, and he even marries and divorces the members of his community himself.

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All contacts with external factors are made personally by Carter, and only rarely does he permit another member of the "Princes" to be interviewed by the media.

The Commission has noticed this in the course of its visits to Mitzpeh Rimon and Arad, and also at its meetings with the leaders of the sect in Dimona and Jerusalem. When the Commission toured Mitzpeh Rimon and asked to visit residential flats of members of the sect, the "Black Hebrews" refuse to allow this visit under the pretext that without the explicit permission of the "President" (Carter), they are forbidden to establish any contact whatsoever with "strangers". Nor did they answer questions put by members of the Commission. The same thing happened in Arad; there, too, the Commission paid a surprise visit to the living quarters of the Black Hebrews and encountered adamant lack of co-operation. In both cases the Heads of the Local Council were not present; they were known to the members of the sect, but this would not induce the sect to open before the Commission the residential apartments of the "Black Hebrews" or to make them talk in any other way.

At the meetings which the Commission held with the leaders of the sect in Dimona and Jerusalem the only spokesman on behalf of the "Black Hebrews" was Ben-Ami Carter. Moreover, when the members of the Commission approached on such occasions members of the leadership of the sect with direct questions, they got no reply but were in all cases referred to Carter.

Internal Discipline.

Internal discipline within the sect is very strong; if friction or differences of opinion arise, they are brought before an internal Court; on no account are they brought before the Legal Authorities of the State.

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The Israeli Police claims that to offenders of the laws of the sect punitive measures are applied which include corporal punishment, confiscation of passports, and excommunication. The Police also believes that many women, who were persuaded to emigrate to Israel, are held here against their will, and all attempts of communication with them by members of their families in the U.S. have been in vain.

In a series of articles published by the "JERUSALEM POST" in January 1979 there appeared rumors of mysterious disappearances of men and women of the sect, the imprisonment of "criminals", flogging, maltreatment of minors, and confiscation of passports. In particular the newspaper report is based on the statements made by one member who had left the sect, named "M". According to him, men were beaten because of their refusal to go to work or because they showed laziness. Another form of punishment was to send people to wander about in the desert for forty days. One housewife in Dimona, who lives in the neighborhood of the sect, claimed in her statement to the correspondent of the J.P. that a number of persona had disappeared quite suddenly, and that she had seen bodies being taken out of houses in the middle of the night. She also stated that another form of punishment meted out by the leaders of the sect was the shaving of heads of men, women and children who had offended against the laws of the community. Other neighbors - the J.P. claims - tell about the beating of children; children, even very small ones, who accept sweets from strangers, are cruelly beaten up.

In the testimonies given before the Commission, the Jewish neighbors of the "Black Hebrews" did not produce allegations of that kind, and the Commission is unable to state whether there is any truth in the above-mentioned accusations. However, it seems that the accusations about cruel

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punishments are exaggerated, if not completely without foundation.

One member of the Israel Police force, who lives close to the residence of the sect in Dimona, and who knows very well - perhaps better than anyone else - what goes on there, denied in his testimony to the Commission the existence of severe punitive measures, including corporal punishment.

In the "Neve Tirtza" prison the Commission met for a lengthy talk with one of the women of the sect, just before her expulsion to the U.S. because of shoplifting in the supermarket of Arad. The woman, who was very intelligent, answered openly and frankly to the questions put by the members of the Commission, who got the impression that she was telling the truth. That woman had been expelled from the sect because of a criminal conviction, a fact which supported the credibility of her statements. She absolutely denied the reports of any use of corporal punishment. According to her, the punitive measures taken are of a moral-social nature. According to her, the discipline prevailing in the sect is the result of a strong inner belief in the righteousness of the community and blind trust in the leader Carter. According to her, the strong social framework and every individual's desire to prove himself within the community provide the main deterrent against the commitment of offenses and violations of the law towards the outside world and the violation of rules of the community internally. (To our question: "So why did you steal an avocado?" she replied: "I was very hungry.").

In connection with the punishment of minors, the Commission has before it the material of an inquiry carried out by a social worker in connection with a minor who ran away from Dimona after a quarrel with his parents. The findings of the investigation showed that there is no physical punishment of children among the sect beyond the customary between

parents and children in a normal society.

Out of a desire to keep a low profile, not to provide any pretext to the Authorities for an expulsion from the country, the leadership is in the habit of removing from its midst persons who have come into conflict with the law. There have also been cases where a number of men and women have left the sect of their own free will. Their exact number, even though it is not known, is not very large, if one takes into consideration the difficult conditions from all points of view under which the "Black Hebrews" live.

The Commission has been unable to determine whether, within the framework of the sect, people are held against their explicit will. Those who make these allegations (the police and neighbors) have no proof to substantiate their claim.

In summing up this chapter it may be pointed out that, in the course of its work, the Commission encountered hundreds of "Black Hebrews": men, women and children. The general impression they left behind was that of healthy people who are satisfied with their lot. Insofar as such a general impression from what we saw carries any weight, one can state that the rumors of a regime of terror and blind obedience customary within the sect are apparently without foundation. At any rate, not a single concrete piece of evidence has been brought before us that would prove contrary to this finding.

In this connection it is worth pointing out that after these findings had been written down, new information reached the Chairman of the Commission during his stay in the U.S., which came from one of the members of the sect who had left it and returned to the U.S. The man, who wanted to remain incognito because he feared vengeance, reported that the members of the sect are totally under the power of Ben-Ami Carter,

who rules by virtue of his personality and the imposition of fear and terror. There are many members of the sect who want to return to the U.S., but are afraid to do so because of Carter's regime of terror".

As regards the aims of the leadership the man said in a written statement: "The Black Hebrews" are organized similar to the sect in Georgetown, only worse. While the people of Georgetown did not want to harm the State in which they were living, the "Black Hebrews" are organized as a State in itself which does not recognize the State of Israel. The leaders of the sect are conspiring in the medium range and in the long run: after they will have established themselves and will have brought here thousands of negroes, to establish their sovereignty and to carry out many and evil actions that are liable to harm Israel, her character and her independence... It is their objective to bring as many people to Israel as they can, to establish facts, and to set up their bases with a strong potential for the realization of their aims. Although the majority of the members of the sect are motivated by pure religious feelings, part of their leaders are corrupt and use the people, after indoctrination and persuasion, to carry out acts of theft, fraud and smuggling in order to transfer money and valuables to the leaders and to the Black Hebrews in Israel and to intensify the migration to Israel."

The "Black Hebrews" as a sect.

The term we use to denote the "Black Hebrews" is "'CUT'" (Hebrew) (Cult). The American paper "NEW YORK TIMES" published in January 1979 (as reported in the JERUSALEM POST series) a number of characteristics common to all "cults", whose number in the US alone is in the neighborhood of three thousand:

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- a. A cult is always headed by a charismatic leader who claims new revelations from Heaven. His word is holy, and those who do not chant his tune are regarded as infidels.
- b. The leader creates a new framework, mostly a commune, in which the members of the cult live together, very often adopting a new name and cutting off all contact with their "original" families.
- c. The leader lays down the laws of the cult, although he himself does not always strictly observe them.
- d. The cult develops an apocalyptic "Weltanschauung", according to which customary moral laws are abolished by order of the leader.
- e. The leader operates sophisticated techniques of control over his flock. The members of his community regard them as means for the implementation of a religious regime, while the definition of an observer from outside would rather be that of brainwashing.

No doubt, this definition in general lines would fit the "Black Hebrews" in Israel, and any approach to the problem and its possible solution must take this into account. The examination of the phenomenon according to yardsticks customary in relation to other social groups defeats the purpose. Tragic proof to that effect was given to the world in November 1978, when more than eight hundred members of the cult "Temple of the People" in Guyana committed, collectively and ceremoniously, suicide by order of their leader. The lesson which ought to be learned from that tragedy is, that Human Society must adopt special patterns of handling the assorted cults, in an ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ effort to find the correct

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balance between the protection of the interest of Society vis a vis perverse phenomena, on the one hand, and tolerance within the framework of legal norms towards those groups, on the other hand. Any extreme approach either way would defeat the purpose and is liable to cause disaster. This aspect, too, was taken into consideration by the Commission.

E. LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE SECT IN ISRAEL.

Housing.

In their three places of settlement: Dimona, Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon, the "Black Hebrews" live in concentrations. The families who came to this country in the first waves of immigration got the privilege of apartments by "Amidar" under the customary conditions of privilege. However, when the policy towards the sect changed this was stopped. The members of the sect managed to rent additional apartments with their own money; but the number of Jewish inhabitants who are willing to let such apartments is dwindling. Because of the communal characteristics of the sect, the numerical increase thanks to natural multiplication, and the addition of hundreds of people who have come into the country during the last few years by illegal means, has created a problem of the most severe overcrowding. Today more than twenty persons live together in apartments of 64 meter square and even smaller apartments of 42 m². The number of people per room in Dimona on an average is more than ten (!) In Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon the overcrowding is somewhat less, but also far surpasses customary norms of population density in development towns. The density of housing of the "Black Hebrews" in "Shekhunat Hanitzahon" in Dimona is five times as large as that customary in that town.

This phenomenon of sub-standard living conditions, which is

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unparalleled in this country, not even in slums in other countries, is, in the opinion of the Commission, number one factor responsible for the creation of the tension which has been created between the members of the sect and their Jewish neighbors. And indeed, in no small measure has the problem been created thanks to the centralization characteristic for the sect; however, the national, central and local Authorities cannot be exonerated from the responsibility for that phenomenon, the likes of which is unknown in any enlightened State.

The neighbors of the "Black Hebrews" in Dimona and Arad have most severe complaints about grave ecological nuisances caused by the members of the sect. These complaints have constantly been voiced during the last few years. For instance, on October 21, 1976, the committee of "Shekhunat Hanitzahon" wrote a letter to the Mayor of Dimona enumerating the complaints of the Jewish inhabitants. On the subject of overcrowded living conditions, the committee claimed that the members of the sect have "taken possession" of shelters, passages and staircases of houses which are then being used for the performance of ceremonies by members of the sect, for the storage of food, airing of mattresses and clothes. They also complained about incessant noise at all hours of day and night, voices of prayer emanating from their apartments, and revolting smells as a result of their special cooking. They also complained about constant clogging of sewage pipes, overflowing trashcans, and the spreading of bedbugs to their apartments. All this caused "the living conditions having reached the level of a slum below the poverty line".

Similar charges were made by the inhabitants of Arad in a letter to the Prime Minister dated September 10, 1978. According to them, in an

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apartment destined for one family there were crowded together some twenty people, and it (the apartment) cannot stand the burden (housing pressure) created by such a large number of people. The result is: excessive noise, overflow of rubbish, and hygienic problems, and all other subjects connected with the culture of housing and living conditions.

In a law suit submitted to the Supreme Court on behalf of the representatives of the house committees of "Shekhunat Hanitzahon" (Order Nisi, No. 465/78) the representative of the plaintiffs charged on this subject:

- " 1. The "Black Hebrews", who live in a kind of commune, are concentrated in about (34) apartments (rented), mostly from "Amidar", and partly privately rented, in Shekhunat Hanitzahon".
Overcrowding in those apartments is great; in every one of these apartments there live about (30) persons or more. $34 \times 30 = 1020$ people
2. The members of the sect use a common kitchen for all the people in every apartment house, and the meals are taken in the entrances to the apartments.
3. The various facets of life are exhibited to all, in corridors, passages, entrances to houses, in front of the inhabitants of the neighborhood; births take place in shelters; studies in the parks of the quarter; all this has created a situation which is intolerable, which causes the plaintiffs to lead an unbearable life in the residential quarter, and has caused a lowering of the standard of living conditions in that quarter to the plaintiffs.
4. The overcrowded living conditions of the members of the sect in their apartments, who live in the neighborhood of the plaintiffs, the spreading of bedbugs, lice and other vermin; the noise day and night caused by the "Tam-tam" drums; the revolting odors

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The Commission got the impression that this accusation is not true. On the contrary, against the background of the terrible overcrowding prevailing in the dwellings of the "Black Hebrews", one has to mention with praise the existence of absolutely reasonable norms of habitat of the sect.

The Commission paid a lengthy and thorough visit to the "Shekhunat Hanitzhon" quarter in Dimona. The apartments are indeed overcrowded, but the space available has been fully exploited. Instead of chairs, mattresses are dispersed in the rooms which are used for sitting on during the day and for sleeping on during the night. Even so, the space available is insufficient, and the tenants use the mattresses in rotation according to the "warm bed" system. Exemplary order and cleanliness prevail in the rooms and in the hall which serves as a common kitchen for all the tenants. We were told by one of the neighbors that, in honor of the Commission's visit a special 'operation spring-cleaning' was mounted at the place. Even if this were true, it would be very difficult through a one-time cleaning operation to make the apartments look the way they did.

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The same goes for the immediate surroundings of the houses, the cleanliness of which ought to be mentioned with praise, as compared with the yards of other houses in the town and even in the residential quarter.

The same goes for the members of the sect themselves. The members of the Commission met with dozens of people, and they definitely make the impression of being healthy, strong, well-dressed, and satisfied with their lot. It would be absurd to assume that all this is the result ^{of a} planned "show" which had been put on. All the same, there is no doubt that the housing situation is absolutely intolerable.

On the one hand, it unacceptable that in the State of Israel any population group should be living under such hard conditions as the "Black Hebrews" do.

On the other hand, because of this situation very severe tension has been caused between the members of the sect and their Jewish neighbors. With all the efforts of the "Black Hebrews" to maintain a reasonably good 'quality of life', the fact that such a large number of people live in a relatively small space causes such nuisances as ceaseless noise and tumult days and night, and potential danger of hygienic mishaps. The quality of life in the quarter is gradually deteriorating, and as a result many Jewish families have left the place. The prices for apartments in that zone have dropped enormously, and even at such greatly reduced prices there is no demand for these apartments, as mentioned before.

Hygiene.

In a letter which in July 1978 Shalik Ben Yehuda, one of the leaders of the sect, sent to Idi Amin, President of Uganda, he enumerated a long list of wrongs which have been to the sect in Israel. One of the

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complaints was, that the Authorities had deprived the members of the sect of elementary medical services and that the people themselves had to take care of such services. This claim, which was ^{often} repeated by the leaders of the sect, was definitely not true. From the first day the "Black Hebrews" were offered medical services and public health services, but they refused to make use of them, because they preferred the use of means of "natural" healing. All attempts made by the town counsellors and Health Authorities to influence them to accept medical treatment were in vain. Only in cases of danger to life did they deign to agree to the transfer of the sick to hospitals. According to them, there are among the members of the sect physicians and qualified nurses who are capable to deal by themselves with their medical problems. About a year ago the "Black Hebrews" were accepted as members by the "Histadrut", the General ~~XXXXXX~~ Federation of Hebrew Workers, and by virtue of that membership they are entitled to enjoy "Kupat Holim" services (Sick Fund); however, as said before, they do not make use of that right except in extreme cases. This was also admitted by Ben-Ami Carter at the time, when in March 1979 representatives of the Inspectorate of the U.S. Congress visited Dimona. ?

The Commission did not succeed in obtaining statistical information on the state of health of the members of the sect, although - as mentioned before - the external visual impression was positive and does not support the version of the Police report, according to which "many of the children are in a state of malnutrition, and many diseases are known to exist among the members of the sect." Also, the doctors and nurses of the public health services, who testified before the Commission, did not confirm these reports. The local doctor was unable to reply

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to the question as to whether the percentage of diseases and mortality among the members of the sect was higher than the normal average. Only one case of postmortem had been dealt with by him. Nurses of the public services told the Commission that they had tried to influence the members of the sect to bring the babies to the local mother-and-baby care stations, but they had refused. They also refuse to vaccinate the babies. It was only recently that three children, who suffered from environmental infection, were referred to them for treatment.

Deliveries are performed by the midwives among the women of the sect in shelters, and the labour-pains are accompanied by the noise of African tam-tam drums as a diversion but also as a kind of magic charm for the health of mother and infant. As a result, births are not registered in the Ministry of Interior, and the same goes for cases of death, the number of which is not known (the reporting of cases of death is obligated by law). The Municipality of Dimona has set aside burial grounds for the dead of the sect, and there the members of the sect bury their dead, also those from Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon. At that cemetery there are about thirty graves, but the Ministry of Health, District office at Beersheba, issued only three Death Certificates. PPT

The housing conditions of the "Black Hebrews" particularly the overcrowding, are liable - despite the observance of reasonable standards of hygiene - to cause grave health hazards, including the outbreak of epidemics and environmental diseases. The Ministry of Health has more than once warned of such hazards.

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Education.

The sect maintains an independent school in Dimona which also serves the children from Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon. The classes of the school, which is called "Kingdom School", are dispersed among a number of living rooms in "Shekhunat Hanitzahon" and in one shelter of one of the houses in that quarter. The severe overcrowded conditions which characterize the living quarters of the "Black Hebrews" also apply to the classrooms.

In March 1976, Mr. Amihai Meir, Regional Co-ordinator of Communal Work on behalf of the "Histadrut" (General Workers' Federation) carried out a survey on the "Black Hebrews", in the course of which he visited the school of the sect. Hereunder follows his description, which is in congruence with the things reported to the Commission:

" I would divide the subjects taught at their school into two categories:

- a. Theoretical and practical studies like Hebrew and arithmetic;
- b. Abstract studies, which are of a spiritual moral-religious nature, mainly based on the spirit of the Bible, according to their interpretation. The teachers are all members of the sect, and are graduates of colleges in the U.S. (according to their own testimony).

We visited three "classes" during lessons (out of nine existing classes according to them); in two of them the lessons took place in living rooms and one in a shelter. In the living rooms, the area of which is not more than 12 m^2 each, there were 12 children of both sexes in one class, aged 5 - 7 years; and 15 children of both sexes in the other room aged 10 - 13 years. In the shelter, the area of which is not larger than 20 m^2 there were 25 children of both sexes aged 14 - 18 years (because of the small number of children of one age-group, the classes are built on two and three age-groups).

In the classrooms the children were sitting on mattresses (the only furniture in the room), and in the shelter they were sitting on wooden benches while they were holding their books and exercise-books on their knees. At the time of our visit the children of the higher grade class who sat in the shelter were having a lesson in Hebrew given by the teacher in accordance with our school-books for the seventh grade; in the classes that were held in the living rooms the children were "learning" by hearing two woman-teachers voice sentences of a moral nature, interspersed - without any logical order - with sentences that were supposed to convey concepts of friendship, fraternity, peace, the holy ghost(or divinity), accompanied by examples taken from stories about the patriarchs according to the Bible.

I am not an expert on the analysis and evaluation of teaching methods, but if we understand the concept "Education" in a broader sense than a system of methods and contents aimed at conveying knowledge - one has to state, with some envy, some of the achievements in the sphere of teaching norms of behavior to the school-children. These find their expression in the revelations of internal discipline, respect towards an adult person (and in particular to the teacher), as well as in their attitude to order and cleanliness; the children all wear school uniform which is simple and clean. Absolute quiet prevails during lessons (including the class of the 5 - 7 age--group). If a pupil is asked a question by the teacher, only he (she) will get up from his seat (the mattress on the floor or the bench) to give an answer."

The maintenance of an educational system which is independent from and uncontrolled by the Ministry of Education is contrary to the laws



of the State of Israel concerning Education, and here again we have a consequence resulting from the problem of the status or rather the lack of legal status of the "Black Hebrews" in this country.

It must be pointed out that eleven children of the "Black Hebrews" who arrived in Israel with the first wave of immigration, who enjoyed recognition by the Authorities (as stated before), were registered in the State school in Dimona and learned there for some time. Later, when the relationship towards the sect changed, the doors of the school were closed to the additional children who arrived in this country; as a result, the leaders of the sect decided to take out the eleven "recognized" school-children, in order - as they claim - to prevent a feeling of discrimination between the children. Carter testified before the Commission that even today they are ready to send all the children to the network of Kindergarten and State-schools if the schools agreed to accept them.

Employment and Sources of Income.

The sources of livelihood of the "Black Hebrews" can be divided into two : income from self-employment, and contributions from abroad. As has already been emphasized, all the members of the sect are staying in Israel illegally. Even if they had valid tourist visas (which have expired long ago), they would still require special work permits from the Ministry of Interior, and these have not been issued.

The employment service does not, therefore, recognize the members of the sect and does not register them as being entitled to get work. Thus they are not directed to any place of work, anyhow, and the employers in various works who do employ members of the sect knowingly violate the law. In many cases this fact is exploited as a pretext for employing them on

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conditions of lower wages than those paid to other workers, and the terms of their employment are mostly "temporary", or "seasonal" without any social privileges or benefits. A large part of the men of the sect work in industrial enterprises in the region of the Dead Sea, Dimona and the Aravah, mostly with private contractors as simple laborers. In Mitzpeh Rimón members of the sect are employed by the Local Council as maintenance workers and gardeners.

One important source of income is the ensemble "Envoys of the Soul" a troupe of vocal folklore numbering 30 men and women, headed by Chaim Blackwood. The troupe appears with a great deal of success in many places throughout the country, sometimes even twice on one day.

In Dimona the sect maintains two workshops for gold- and silver-smith and leather-works which also constitute a source of not inconsiderable income, as well as a store for the sale of nature-food (health food).

However, the Commission is convinced (even though the "Black Hebrews" do not admit that) that a considerable part of their income is derived from contributions coming from abroad. Evidence to that effect is contained in the material that has been placed before the Commission; at any rate, some of the leaders of the sect in the U.S. have admitted that fact at a meeting that was held between them and the Chairman of the Commission. The monetary contributions that are given by the members of the sect who live in the U.S. are raised for that purpose as a permanent regular levy, they also come from sympathizers among the black community in the U.S. who, although they do not identify with the ideas of the sect, are impressed by the propaganda about the suffering which is the lot of the "Black Hebrews" in Israel.

There are also indications to the effect that those who join the

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sect transfer all the funds in their possession to the leaders of the sect, and there are those who claim that this is not always done in a legally customary manner.

All the income is transferred to the common kitty of the sect, administered by the "Minister of Finance", who distributes the money in accordance with the needs of each family. All consumer goods, particularly food, are purchased in bulk and are paid for by the collective purse of the sect.

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F. OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW
AND INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME.

The Commission devoted particular attention to the subject of observance of the law by the members of the "Black Hebrews". This subject has two aspects: (1) violations of the law, deriving from the lack of an official status, when the very presence of the "Black Hebrews" is illegal, with all the implications of this situation as regards regulations concerning registration of population, education, work, health, etc. To the same aspect of the subject belongs also the illegal activity carried out by them in attempts to enter the country illegally., to which we will refer later on. The main interest of this subject is the second aspect, viz.: "ordinary" criminal activity and measure of frequency among the sect. The neighbors of the "Black Hebrews" complained in their letters to the Authorities and in their evidence before the Commission about the serious criminality which exists on the part of the members of the sect. In a letter which the inhabitants in Arad addressed to the Prime Minister dated September 10, 1978 they pointed out: "the Negroes are not descendants of the Falashi (Jews) but are composed of offenders against the law in the U.S. and Abyssinia".

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In a petition submitted by the representatives of the house committees in "Shekhunat Hanitzahon" in Dimona, mentioned above, they emphasize: "Since their arrival in this country the Black Hebrews have had many clashes with the law, and complaints have been lodged against them, inter alia because of cases of manslaughter, assault of policemen, theft, illegal assembly, assault, deception, disturbance of public order, nise, imposture, falsification of documents, obtaining goods under false pretenses, falsification and distribution of falsified documents".

This series of offenses is copied mainly from the report of the "Special Branch" of the Investigation Department of the Israel Police of January 1978; it distorts the picture of the situation; the accusations ^{extremely} are/exaggerated and have been refuted.

Even in accordance with the above-mentioned police report, there have been submitted altogether - since the arrival of the negroes in this country - in the fall of 1969 up to the middle of 1973 eighteen complaints in connection with the offenses listed above. (by the way, not cases (plural) of manslaughter, but one case of the killing of one man, a member of the sect, by his comrades apparently as a result of an internal quarrel).

Since the middle of 1973 until today, according to the contents of the above-mentioned police report:

"Since the adoption of a policy of arrests and expulsions against them, discipline among the sect was increased by the leaders, with the aim not to provide the Authorities with a pretext to expel them. This fact led to a drastic reduction of the number of criminal offences. In every case of criminal offense the leaders even make a point of cooperating with the police against the offender, in order to prevent the sect as a whole from being bothered".

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Altogether five criminal offenses were recorded during the last few years in which "Black Hebrews" were involved. None of these cases was of a particularly serious nature. As we have already mentioned before, the conviction of one member of the sect because of a crime is followed by sanctions of two kinds:

- (a) Expulsion from the country by the Authorities;
- (b) Automatic excommunication of the offender by the leadership of the sect.

In his evidence before the Commission, Chief Superintendant Felix Saban, an officer of the District Headquarters, Southern District, of the Israel Police, pointed out that criminality among the sect is less than among the Jews.

A difficult problem which has cropped up in connection with criminality and even with the security aspect is the lack of an official identification document for the members of the sect. Unlike the citizens of the State, who are by law required to carry identity cards and to present them to the Competent Authorities, no identity cards have, of course, been given to the "Black Hebrews". Nor do they carry their passports with them; some of them destroyed their passports; the other passports are apparently collectively safeguarded by the leaders of the sect. The leaders of the sect have issued private "identity cards" in 1975, to which photographs of the bearers are attached. In the identity card, which is described as "Temporary Identity Card", it is stated that "the bearer of this document,..... has no permanent Identity Card, because the status of the group of Israeli (?) Hebrews in this country has not yet been officially determined". The lack of official identity cards and of the possibility to locate and identify (them) make things very difficult for the Authorities in general and for the police in particular. The police suspects that part of the "Black Hebrews" change their identity in case of need, and the lack of formal registration and

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Identification are liable to lead to it that criminal offenders may succeed in evading the arm of the law, and it may also make it possible for undesirable persons among the sect to disappear. Twice during the years 1975-1976 the police opened files because of non-carrying of official identity cards, but those files were closed. More than a year ago, the police submitted to the Law Court in Beersheba thirty indictments against "Black Hebrews" for non-carrying of identity cards and illegal sojourn in Israel. The intention was to make test cases out of them for the sect as a whole. These cases are still "pending", because the Authorities have come to the conclusion that the issue necessitates a public solution and is linked with the broader complex of the problem of the "Black Hebrews".

The police was even considering the possibility of taking fingerprints at the time of entry into Israel, but this idea was dropped when it turned out that, from the legal point of view, it was not permissible to demand fingerprints from someone who enters Israel as long as that person has not been arrested for some offense against the law. On the other hand, the enactment of an appropriate regulation by force of the Law of Entry to Israel would have to apply to all persons entering Israel, without exception.

The Security Aspect.

Does the sect of the "Black Hebrews" constitute a security risk? The Jewish inhabitants, their neighbors, claim that this is indeed so. According to them - and the police report bears this out - the members of the sect, including the women, practise with carate sticks and face to face combat. (The leaders of the sect claim that the long sticks carried by some of the men are "walking sticks" symbolizing their wanderings until they reached the Promised Land). Rumor has it (and so far no evidence to that effect has been established) that there are also firearms in the

possession of the sect. The police claims in its above-mentioned report that the men keep independent guard, which is reinforced at night, and whenever a police patrol is asked to come to their residential quarter, unusual alertness among them can be sensed.

The Jewish inhabitants are suspicious about the hostility of the "Black Hebrews" towards the State and about the possibility that at a time of national emergency they are liable to cooperate with any adversary or enemy. One of the inhabitants, who appeared before the Commission, claimed that one member of the sect at said to him that "a day will come that will be worse than the Yom Kippur War, and then they will take over Dimona". Others have claimed that they were worried that at a time of emergency, when the Jewish men are mobilized, they would have to leave their families behind, for good or evil, among an estranged and hostile population.

In a memorandum which the inhabitants of Arad sent to the Prime Minister, they wrote:

"Above all we are worried by the fact that the members of the above-mentioned sect lead their lives as a "State within the State", without any relationship to or abidance by the laws of the State of Israel. The men of the sect undergo training of a military nature, what for?... The members of the sect and its leaders publicly declare that they are the legal owners of the country and that they will act in order to realize that right. Is this the purpose of the "military " training which arouse the anxiety of the inhabitants"?

The leaders of the sect vigorously deny that they have any hostile intentions of any kind towards Israel or her residents. According to Ben-Ami Carter, they regard themselves as Israelis to all intents and purposes who return to the State 'good' instead of the 'evil' which the State does to them.

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According to him, during the Yom Kippur War the members of the sect volunteered for various duties, and do so even now.

And indeed, in Carter's possession there is a bunch of letters of thanksgiving from IDF units, for entertainment performances given by the ensemble "Envoys of the Soul" to the troops during and after the war, as well as for sports performances and visits of schools to the residential quarters of the sect in Dimona.

In another chapter we describe the relations maintained between the sect and various factors abroad, also those that are not friendly towards Israel, to make an understatement. It is true, so far one has not discovered any case of a connection with a hostile factor with the intent to harm actively in any way the State of Israel; however, the very presence of a closed, mystic sect with a strong motivation, whose ideology is based on the "Black Hebrews" being the real masters of this country, obligates the Authorities to maintain security alertness as regards the goings-on within the sect.

Criminal Activity in the U.S.

While the criminal activity of members of the sect in this country is limited, as mentioned before, there do exist strong suspicions concerning criminal activity of persons who belong to the sect of the "Black Hebrews" in the U.S., who - according to all signs - escaped to Israel and found shelter in the concentrations of the sect.

Back in 1973 the Israeli Consulate in Chicago warned that, according to reports from reliable sources, a number of "wanted" persons (because of criminal offenses) succeeded in infiltrating to Israel, and among black communities in the U.S. the names of the towns Dimona and Arad became known as "'towns of shelter" in which it was possible to find protection from the arm of the law, creditors, and members of the family. There -

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so it was said - it was possible to 'turn a new leaf by way of changing one's name and adopting a new identity.

At the beginning of April 1977 the "CHICAGO TRIBUNE" published a series of articles, which found a wide echo in the communications media in the U.S., about investigations carried out by the F.B.I., the Chicago Police, and the Departments of Finance and the Post in connection with the swindling of banks, supermarkets, etc. for amounts between six and ten million dollars during the years 1975 - 1977. The investigation focused on the community living in the South of Chicago - according to the articles - calling itself "Black Hebrews". According to the F.B.I. that community numbers about five hundred members, of whom fifty are suspected of criminal activity. The paper pointed out that about eight to ten banks in the city had been harmed by activities of fraud through the distribution of false checks without cover. Damage had also been caused to large stores selling food and diamonds as a result of the use of stolen credit cards. The group had been in the habit of planting its men in "promising" places of work, who by themselves or through cooperation had participated in the theft of checks, credit cards and other documents. One of the leaders of the group, Bernard Bradly, had tried to enter Israel, was caught, and expelled back to the US. He was arrested by the U.S. Authorities and charged with theft, the holding of stolen property, forging checks, and travelling to another country for the purpose of evading trial.

Incidentally, in one case five of the members of the group, who were automatically photographed when they came to deposit checks in a jewellery store, were identified. When the police tried to locate them and arrest them, it turned out that they had gone to Israel. A number of travel agencies in Chicago complained to the police that travelling

tickets to Israel (and return) had been purchased by means of stolen credit cards.

According to the articles in the "CHICAGO TRIBUNE" the leaders of the group "encourage their members to do such actions quasi for the sake of a higher purpose, viz. helping the lost tribes of Israel to return to their homeland."

According to the newspapers which investigated the goings-on in the group, the parents are at first pleased that their children are engaged in some kind of social activity within the framework of the group instead of roaming about in the streets, but very often they themselves become the victims of their children. One father told that his daughter had stolen \$ 3,000 from him before she travelled to Israel. One woman told that her sister had stolen \$ 45,000 from the bank where she had worked before she escaped to Israel. One man told that one day he discovered that all his money in cash had disappeared, together with his credit cards and checkbook. He later found out that his eighteen year old daughter had purchased goods to the tune of \$ 8,000 by using his credit cards, and had cashed checks worth \$ 3,000 and, inter alia, had bought flight tickets to Israel for herself and for another five members of her group.

According to the police, during the years 1975 - 1977 dozens of similar cases had occurred. According to the police estimate the damage caused by these acts of fraud and theft ^{amounted} to a sum between six to ten million \$. In the opinion of the police, most of the suspects are living in Israel.

Information has reached the Commission that activities of this nature have not ceased, and even increased in the course of last year. The "Black Hebrews" are under constant follow-up by the F.B.I. but, as far as is known, the suspected persons have not been brought to trial so far - a fact which is rather astonishing in itself.

7. PROPAGANDA OF THE "BLACK HEBREWS."

During the last decade, the public relations and propaganda activity of the above-mentioned sect was very intensive and concentrated in two directions: (1) dissemination of the principles of the sect among the black community, particularly in the U.S. and in Africa; (2) an anti-Israeli propaganda campaign, sometimes anti-Jewish, which began in 1971 and which was suppressed, as explained later on, in the middle of 1978.

The Public Relations Activity.

From the two main centers of the sect in Dimona and Chicago the doctrine of the sect is disseminated to the black communities in the world, mainly in the U.S. and in Africa. Pamphlets and manifestoes explain the principles of the sect and invite people to join their ranks. It is interesting to emphasize that the reputation of the sect is rather well known among the black communities in the U.S., and although the number of its followers is not large, there exists an awareness and even a certain identification with its "sufferings" in Israel among many blacks, particularly among leaders and public figures. The main center of activity of the sect in the U.S. is in Chicago, to which potential emigrants to Israel are referred, and there they enjoy financial aid in order to assist them in their emigration in every possible way. According to the police report, there exists a widespread propaganda activity in a number of African countries as well. Thomas Glover, one of the more prominent leaders of the sect, who was expelled from Israel in July 1973, set up a center of the "Black Hebrews" in Ghana. He established close relations with the leaders of that State, and disseminates the doctrine of the sect with the aid of educational and religious institutions there.

The activities of the sect also spread to Liberia, Ethiopia, Mali,

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Togo, Nigeria and South Africa. In Togo, for instance, a plot of land has been acquired by one of the churches, on which a center and missionary house is to be set up for the "Black Hebrews". The establishment of such centers is not merely intended for the dissemination of the doctrine of the sect; it is also destined to be a meeting ground for potential immigrants to Israel, whose aspiration to emigrate is motivated by the economic crisis which plagues their countries no less than by their adherence to the principles of the sect. According to the police report, the activity of the sect was extended in 1978 to Greece as well, where the emissaries of the sect establish relations with negroes who have come to Greece from the U.S. and African countries, in an attempt to persuade them to immigrate to Israel.

Anti-Israel Propaganda.

The anti-Israeli propaganda activity began to sprout back in 1970, but it became really intensive and concentrated in the middle of 1971. After the first waves of enthusiasm had abated, in which the first "Black Hebrews" who had come to this country were received, the Authorities in Israel sobered up and began to see the dangers involved in the immigration of hundreds and thousands of members of the sect to this country. The gates of Israel were then closed to them, possibilities of housing and work dwindled, tension and hostility between them and their Jewish environment developed and steadily escalated.

The leadership of the sect - headed by Ben-Ami Carter and Shalik Ben-Yehudah - began a propaganda onslaught against the State and its authorities, which became steadily more fierce. That propaganda was rather diversified: In the communications media (particularly in the "black" press), at conferences held by the sect in the U.S., and in their appeals to various public factors throughout the world, including factors hostile to Israel.

Hereunder is an excerpt from a piece of propaganda, incitement and abuse which appeared in the communications media, clandestine newspapers, and leaflets concerning the "Black Hebrews". In an interview to the "BALTIMORE SUN" of November 6, 1971, Carter warns that "perhaps two million, perhaps a lot more, will come from the U.S. in order to salvage the State of Israel from its Jewish inhabitants, for God has commanded me to take over the State of Israel". (Later, in an interview with Yoela Har-Shafi of the Hebrew paper "YEDIOT AHARONOT" of December 31, 1971, Carter denied having ever declared that "Black Hebrews" would expel the Jews from Israel. At the same time he claimed that the Government of Israel would not last long, because it was not a true Government).

In the organ of the sect in Chicago "SUNDAY SUN - TIMES", of September 25, 1977, the Jewish inhabitants of Chicago are accused of being greedy for profit and of exploiting the Christian population. In one of the paragraphs it says: "Money is the God of those sinners, the Jewish white dogs". A picture of the Prime Minister has the caption: "MENAHEM BEGIN - THE SPIRIT OF HITLER".

One clandestine black newspaper in San Francisco of September 1977 quotes a news item from "Associated Press" about the forthcoming expulsion of a group of negroes that had come to Israel under the disguise of pilgrims', accompanied by the correspondents remarks, who writes, inter alia:

"The Jews are carrying out the same atrocities which they claim to have been committed by Hitler. Those are the same Jews who have stolen the homeland of the Palestinians and who expelled them like herds of cattle to refugee camps where they live under inhuman conditions... Let's tear the mask from the face of those Israeli criminals".

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According to what appeared in a series of articles in the "JERUSALEM POST" about the "Black Hebrews", the radio station of the Negroes in Chicago devoted at the time a great many programs to the sect, including a reference to "our brother "Sadat and his prospective war in which he will kill the evil beast" (of course this was broadcast before the peace talks with Egypt).

In a pamphlet disseminated by Shalik Ben-Yehuda in 1973 as propaganda for his book "From America to the Promised Land", The "Foreign Secretary" of the sect brings a long list of complaints about acts of discrimination, persecution and oppression by the Israeli Authorities (all of which are utterly and totally without foundation in reality). The Israel Police is called in that pamphlet the "GESTAPO POLICE".

The pamphlet is not satisfied with an attack on Israel, but includes incitement in a clear anti-semitic tune against the Jews in the U.S. and against the aid given by the U.S. to Israel:

"We have to remind our black brethren that 500 million dollars from American taxpayers' money have been given to the racist regime in Israel without a single word of protest having been voiced by the black community. Another 800 million dollars were collected by the United Jewish Appeal, an amount the major part of which has been stolen from the blacks by Jewish merchants greedy for profit."

And elsewhere: "We call to our black brothers to wake up in view of the Jewish oppression and exploitation of our community. Those same racist Jews have taken over every vein of our economic life"...

The pamphlet ends with a call for a general boycott of Jewish business in the U.S. and for the end of all support of the State of Israel by the U.S. Government both directly and by way of the U.J.A.

These are only selected excerpts from the propaganda material that has been published by the sect, on its behalf or on its inspiration.

ACTIVITIES AT CONFERENCES AND APPEALS TO INTERNATIONAL FACTORS.

All those years the leaders of the sect made a great many appeals to various international factors, which started even before the relations between them and the Israeli Authorities were upset. According to the contents of the article written by Yoela Har-Shafi, mentioned before, the "Black Hebrews" sent in April 1971 a petition to the sub-committee for human rights of the U.N. in which they request that their right be recognized to settle in Israel and to be a third party to the Middle Eastern conflict, in addition to the Arabs and the Israelis.

On November 16, 1971, there assembled about five hundred young people at the convention of the sect in Philadelphia for the planning of the political struggle. At the convention there also participated two representatives of "the Pioneer Corps in Dimona" and the "national" flag, a lion's cub of Yehuda, surrounded by the 12 tribes of Israel against a blue background.

On November 28, 1972, Ben-Ami Carter wrote an open letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim in which he complained about the U.N. resolution to set up a Jewish State on the territory of Eretz-Israel. In that letter he wrote, inter alia:

"The Jews from Europe are not the true Hebrews to whom the country has been promised according to prophetic foresight.... Zionist propaganda throughout the world is to blame for robbing the country from its rightful masters, viz. the "Black Hebrews"...The U.N. has given legitimacy to this state of affairs and will have to bear the responsibility for all the grave consequences. The U.N. must recognize the national right of "the Black Hebrews" as a people in Eretz-Israel..."

On September 24, 1973 and November 30, 1973, the leadership of the sect appealed to the then President of the U.S., Richard Nixon; to Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger; and to the American Ambassador in Israel,

Kenneth Keating, in a letter, copies of which were sent to the President of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, and to the Secretary-General of the U.N. It contained a vigorous demand for them to be invited to the Geneva Peace Conference at the end of 1973, because "they were the true representatives of the State of Israel". That appeal was made in the same spirit as Carter's previous claim who complained about the fact that the Israel Government had not consulted him in March 1972, when King Hussein proposed the establishment of a Palestinian State on the West Bank. According to Carter the entire Knesset ought to have come to Dimona to hear his opinion on the subject.

On December 31, 1973, the sect wrote to all black Congressmen in the U.S. in a memorandum which largely resembled the propaganda pamphlet of Shalik Ben-Yehuda mentioned before. The accused the Israeli Authorities of groundless arrests of "Black Hebrews" and of manhandling innocent members of the sect. The memorandum drew the attention of the black Congressmen to the fact that a substantial percentage of the billion dollars allotted to Israel had come from money paid by black taxpayers and at the expense of the advancement of social plans for the blacks. The letter ends with a call for the following steps to be taken: a boycott of all Jewish businesses in the U.S.; the establishment of a lobby of black Congressmen who should act for the cessation of all American aid to Israel; an exhaustive inquiry into the arrest of members of the sect and their imprisonment in Ramle, and for their immediate release. (This appeal did not stop Shalik Ben-Yehuda from writing on another occasion that "the black Congressmen in Washington are under the complete control of the Jews").

In interviews given by Shalik in April 1974 to the Israeli and American press he claimed that the establishment of the State of Israel was made possible thanks to the money of Jewish capitalists in the U.S., accumulated

TO THE MONEY OF NEWARK CAPITALISTS, INC.
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

by Jewish slave-traders through the exploitation of black slaves. The Jews and not "white Christians" are the real rulers of the financial establishment in the U.S., Shalik claimed, while quoting from "Mein Kampf" by Hitler, Yemakh Shemo (= May his name be eradicated).

In October 1977 a manifesto was published in the U.S. by the sect, signed by Aziel Ben Israel, who carried the title "International Ambassador of the Nation", who outlines the ways of action to be adopted by all those faithful to "the Idea":

- a. An appeal to U.S. President Jimmy Carter to stop all aid in the form of money, weapons and food to Israel;
- b. An appeal to the black public in the U.S. to boycott every business in Jewish ownership, and not to support any Jewish candidate for any political office in the U.S.;
- c. An appeal to those churches whose congregation is black to cut off all ties with Israel;
- d. Cessation of all tourism from the U.S. to Israel;
- e. to take legal initiative for the preparation of a test case against the legality of the activity of the United Jewish Appeal;
- f. An appeal to the nations of the world to adopt sanctions against the State of Israel.

Has the Anti-Israeli Propaganda Campaign come to an end?

In the series of articles on the "Black Hebrews" published in the "JERUSALEM POST" attention is drawn to the fact that the latest publication against the State of Israel that can be found in the files of the League against Defamation of the "Benay Brith" organization is an interview of the same Aziel Ben Israel of October 4, 1977 in the newspaper "AMSTERDAM NEWS". According to the JERUSALEM POST the cessation of the propaganda campaign

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against Israel derived from a kind of armistice between the sect and the Authorities, sponsored by a number of respectable Jewish organizations in the U.S., agreed upon in the months of February and March 1978. Later on we will refer to that agreement, which had no doubt implications for the militant behavior of the sect towards Israel.

However, while there has indeed been a cooling down in the public attacks of the leadership of the "Black Hebrews" during the last three years, what has not ceased are the appeals to various international factors in denunciation of the State of Israel. Perhaps the most striking example for that is the letter (already mentioned in the report) of Shalik Ben Yehuda, No. 2 leader in the hierarchy of the sect, dated July 31, 1978, to the then ruler of Uganda, Idi Amin. After the writer inquires into the welfare of Amin and wishes him success in his enterprises, he mentions that profound appreciation which the sect feels for Idi Amin who stands in the breach so valiently and with such devotion in the face of the waves of oppression against the blacks which engulf the entire world.

In this connection Shalik Ben Yehuda draws the attention of Uganda's ruler to the fact that world public opinion is occupied with the plight of the Jews in the Soviet Union, while accusing the USSR of violating the Helsinki agreement concerning human rights. As a matter of fact - the writer claims - the real violations of human rights are committed by the Israel Authorities against the "Black Hebrews". The members of the sect are daily exposed to the confrontation with the reactionary authorities in Israel who rudely trample upon their elementary rights, and all this following the return of the "Black Hebrews" to their fatherland of which they are the real and principal inhabitants. The letter ends with the question: "When will the leaders at last raise their voices against the

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atrocities in Israel committed against the 'Black Israelis'?" And then, the writer promises to keep Idi Amin up to date from time to time concerning their plight in Israel. To the letter there is attached a long appendix of 14 pages which includes in its first part the headings of the chapters of the ideology which guides the sect, and in its second part a list of events indicating the distress of the "Black Hebrews" and the maltreatment meted out to them by the Israeli Authorities in all spheres throughout the years 1969 - 1978.

It would, therefore, be correct to state that, although the anti-Israeli (and anti-Jewish) propaganda campaign of the leadership of the sect has ceased in the international communications media at the beginning of 1978, as a matter of fact that attacks (in a slightly moderate form ^{with} but/no less aggressive) validity) have continued in open and secret appeals to various international factors.

Although it is possible to point out the difficult situation and the hardships suffered by the "Black Hebrews" as a factor in the anti-Israeli propaganda carried out in various degrees of aggressiveness during the last decade, one cannot ignore the vicious defamation and abuse, which partly have absolutely no relevant connection with their difficult objective situation - which derive also from the ideological infrastructure of the sect which regards its members as the 'true masters' of Eretz Israel, and the Jewish inhabitants as foreigners who invaded a country that did not belong to them and 'took it over'.

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8. THE HANDLING OF THE "BLACK HEBREWS" PROBLEM
BY THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES.

The fact that there exists in the State a problem of the sect of "Black Hebrews", and that this problem has become more complex and more aggravating in the course of the last ten years, must be chalked up to the debit of the National Authorities, primarily the Israel Government.

The shortcomings of the Government throughout the entire period, the biggest mistake of which was the adoption of a policy of an ostrich viz. "sit quietly and don't do anything", were the reasons why the Commission was confronted by greatly curtailed options as to its recommendations, with all the alternatives being difficult and most painful. It would have been possible at an early stage, with the arrival of the first groups of "Black Hebrews" in Israel, to deal with the matter promptly and decisively; instead, the Authorities acted slowly, in a state of embarrassment and indecision.

This fact was well expressed by the Director-General of the Ministry of Interior, Haim Kubersky, when he addressed the Knesset Committee on Internal Affairs during the debate on the subject of "the Black Hebrews" on December 21, 1976: just as in every sphere, like medicine, prevention is better than cure, and sometimes the subsequent treatment is almost impossible". The Director-General of the Ministry of Interior was referring to the decision which had been taken to permit the entry into this country of the first group which arrived on December 21, 1969, who were not the first members of the sect to arrive in Israel. They had been preceded by Charles Blackwool, who had been sent from Liberia to examine the conditions

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and to "prepare the ground" for the arrival of the entire sect.

Blackwool came to Israel at the beginning of 1968; then in August 1969 arrived a pioneer group of five men, who settled together with Blackwool in Arad. That group was received with warmth by the employees of the Ministry of Absorption and enjoyed housing and work. Blackwool's claim that he and his comrades were Jews to all intents and purposes was not checked by the Authorities who even displayed enthusiasm at the arrival of "Black Jews" in this country.

While it may perhaps be possible to understand the naive approach towards the first people who came from Liberia, this does not apply to the large group that suddenly landed one night at Lod airfield. Immediately after their arrival, Blackwool demanded immigrants rights for the entire group, in accordance with the "Law of Return".

The official responsible on the spot contacted the then Minister of Interior, H.M. Shapira, and asked him for guidelines. The Minister gave instructions to prepare sleeping arrangements for them for one night; the next day consultations were held on a high level, at which there participated - in addition to the Minister of Interior, his Deputy Dr. I. Ben Meir, the late Yigal Allon Minister of Absorption, the Director-General of the Ministry of Absorption Joseph Geva, and Mrs. Yehudit Hübner, then in charge of the Department of Immigration and Population Registration. For some time Joseph Geva claimed that he had proposed not to approve the entry of the group to Israel; however, according to him: "in those days there were heated arguments on the question 'Who is a Jew'. Unfortunately the Ministry of Interior and his Deputy instructed us to accept them and to settle them temporarily until things would cool off, and not to expel them".

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Mrs. Hübner has another explanation for the decision: "They asked for immigrants visas as Jews and demanded immigrants privileges from the Ministry of Absorption, and since it was not clear whether the Law of Return applied to them or not, the late Minister of Interior, Haim Moshe Shapira decided, after consultation with the Ministry of Absorption (Director-General Mr. Geva), together with the Police and the Jewish Agency, to permit their entry at first as visitors for a period of three months, to give them apartments and work permits, and the Ministry of Absorption agreed to grant them the possibility of absorption".

The Director-General of the Ministry of Interior, Haim Kubersky, in the afore-mentioned debate in the Committee of Internal Affairs, evaluated the decision thus: "The way the matter was handled was a failure from the first step, a mistake committed 'bona fide'. In 1969, when the first group arrived, it was close to the elections. The Ministers wanted to be cautious..."

This "cautiousness", or perhaps it would be better to call it "political sensitivity" was, in the opinion of the Commission, the first of a chain of erroneous decisions on the part of the Government in its handling of the problem of the "Black Hebrews".

The first group was transferred to Dimona and Arad, and its members were received by the inhabitants with a smile of welcome. The children were absorbed in the local schools, and the men were given work. Over the heads of the newcomers there hovered a big question mark concerning their religious origin, and therefore the Ministry of Interior decided, in consultation with the Director-General of the Ministry of Absorption, to approach Rabbi Darai, who was at the time busy with the return of Israel's lost tribes to the fold of the Jewish Nation,

and asked him to take the conversion of the group to Judaism into his hands. Rabbi Darai talked at length with the leaders of the sect, and after he had come to the conclusion that there was not a grain of truth in their claim of being "Black Jews", he tried to persuade them to undergo the procedure of conversion to Judaism. After some hesitation they indeed agreed to that, but then, on March 6, 1970, the second large group of members of the sect arrived, numbering 49 people, including the leader of the "Black Hebrews" Ben-Ami Carter. Their arrival was preceded by an attempt made by the Israel Government to induce the group not to come directly to Israel. According to the recommendation of Rabbi Darai, who had taken the initiative to convert the first group before the arrival of Carter and his people, it was proposed to Carter in writing to go from Liberia first to a transit camp in France, there to undergo the procedure of conversion, and then to arrive in Israel as "Jews to all intents and purposes", within the framework of the Law of Return. Carter replied in an angry letter, in the negative. Again the Authorities faced a dilemma and did not know what to do with the new group. There was no longer any doubt about the fact that the "Black Hebrews" were not Jews; yet again the Government hesitated, and refrained from taking the step that obviously had to be taken, viz. to return the group to its place of origin. It was decided to approve their entry as tourists on a visit "for a period of three months", though without the customary privileges of housing and work permits. The reason given for the ^{"temporary"} entry permit, although it was clear to everybody that the newcomers did not have any intention of leaving the country when the tourist visas, with which they had been equipped, expired, was "on humanitarian grounds", and this is how it was explained by Mrs. Hübner in her interview to the JERUSALEM POST: The majority of the newcomers were women and children

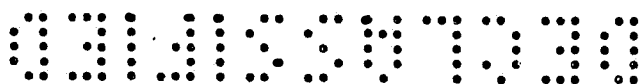
without any financial means. They told us that they had been expelled from Liberia and that they were returning home in order to live here in freedom". Moreover, the members of that group claimed that their husbands, fathers, wives and children, had already arrived in Israel with the first wave, and it was only right and just to allow them to join them within the framework of "reunion of families". Their arguments, although there existed serious doubt as to their truth, were accepted and the members of that group joined their comrades in Dimona.

Knesset Member Yitzhak Peretz, who in the past also served as Mayor of Dimona, has another explanation for the Government's decision to allow the group to remain in the country. He claimed, during the debate in the Knesset Committee on Internal Affairs, that there already existed a decision by the Government to expel the second group, but then arrived in this country the Presidents of African States and the Presidents of Black Universities in the U.S., and there was some apprehension that the expulsion would adversely affect Israel's image.

At any rate, the arrival of the group in Israel put "paid" to the idea of converting the "Black Hebrews" to Judaism. Ben-Ami Carter objected to the conversion quite firmly, and at the general assembly of the members of the sect, that was held in Dimona in those days, it was "unanimously" decided to stop the contacts with Rabbi Darai. As a result of this decision, the conversion files, which had been opened by the Rabbinical Court, were closed. On this subject the Director-General of the Ministry of Interior at the time, Joseph Geva, says: "Rabbi Darai told me about their refusal to join Israel. I travelled to them, talked with their leaders, learned at first hand about their strange viewpoints, and returned with the proposal to expel them... Again it was decided to put it off until the heat cooled off".

In the meantime, the relations between the "Black Hebrews" and their Jewish neighbors steadily deteriorated, and as a result of pressure exerted in writing and orally by the public figures and local inhabitants, the Government again took the subject in hand. In an inter-ministerial consultation, held in October 1971, three possibilities of dealing with the sect were discussed: to regard them as temporary residents; to treat them as undesirables and to expel them in accordance with an expulsion order to be issued by the Minister of Interior; not to regard them as temporary residents but not to expel them either, and to leave them in a status of being tolerated. The decision that was taken was to treat the members of the sect who were already in Israel as being tolerated, but to prevent the entry into this country of additional people who were members of the sect. As a matter of fact, the sojourn of all the "Black Hebrews" - except for the first group of six (already mentioned) - was illegal. They were staying in this country with a status of visitors according to the tourist visas they had been given for three months, which were to be extended up to the maximum of twenty-seven months. The Ministry of Interior refused to respond to the requests of the members of the sect to extend the validity of the visas. Thus the Government acquiesced in the fact that people were living in this country contrary to the laws of the State, with all the grave implications deriving from this situation.

At the same time, it was decided on the expulsion of those additional "Black Hebrews" who would arrive in this country, and on October 8, 1971 when a further group arrived in Lod numbering forty-eight persons, it was held up at the airport and expelled to the U.S.



ATTEMPTS AT EXPULSION FROM THE COUNTRY.

At the same time, the Authorities decided on the expulsion from this country of those "Black Hebrews" who had been convicted for criminal offenses. In 1972, the Minister of Interior - after an interministerial consultation on a high level - issued expulsion orders against two families who had settled in Jericho contrary to the law. One of the families appealed to the Supreme Court (as mentioned in this report before) claiming that the Law of Return applied to them and therefore they should not be expelled from this country.

The Court, while rejecting the appeal and cancelling the order nisi, nevertheless recommended to the Minister of Interior to consider leaving the members of the sect who are already here in this country:

"Nevertheless, perhaps the Minister of Interior will see fit to reconsider the matter of the petitioners, if it would not be just to allow them permanent residence in this country, together with the rest of the members of their community already in this country. One can understand the desire of the Authorities to prevent the concentration of the entire community in Israel and therefore not allowing the entry into this country of additional persons, members of that community, but perhaps it is possible to apply a different yard-stick in relation to this who have already come to this country and have settled in it or have expressed their desire to settle in it permanently" (Bagatz 482/71 : Leoniya Mea Clerk & others, v. Minister of Interior and others, 27 P.D.I., part one, Ayin, 113, 120).

This verdict issued by the Highest Legal Authority on December 7, 1972 only added to the already existing embarrassment of the Israel Authorities in relation to the problem.

This policy of expulsion of those accused of criminal offences among the members of the sect has continued to this day. Any conviction - be it for ever such a minor offense - (like stealing an avocado from the supermarket in Arad) - entails immediate expulsion from this country.

In an attempt to bring about the crumbling of the sect, it was decided in 1973 to expel part of its leaders, on the assumption that with their expulsion the rest of the sect would also leave. At the end of 1973 more than fifty such expulsion orders were issued. However, these attempts did not come off very well, both because the leaders went underground and because of the difficulty in locating and identifying the people who do not carry identity cards, who are also in the habit of changing their places of residence frequently. Another difficulty which cropped up was the fact that a number of the members of the sect appealed to the American Consulate in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, declaring that they were giving up their U.S. citizenship. According to U.S. laws, once a citizen has declared that he was giving up his citizenship of his own free will and has signed a declaration to that effect, he was no longer an American citizen. The legal result was that these persons became apparently persons without citizenship, and according to the U.S. representation in Israel, it was impossible to expel them to the U.S., and actually not to any other State, either, if it is not prepared to accept them. Up to the month of January 1978, as it becomes clear from the report of the Special Branch of the Israel Police, seventy-two "Black Hebrews" gave up their American citizenship in this way.

During the years 1973 - 1976, the Israel Government conducted negotiations with the U.S. Government in connection with this problem. Israel argued that the U.S. as the "mother State" of the members of

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the sectought to take back those members that would be expelled from Israel. The representatives of the U.S. Government, though not denying Israel's argument in principle, put forward reasons based on moral principles rather than legal principles. Only after exhausting discussions did the American Embassy in Israel give its consent, in July 1976, to render aid and to co-operate with the Israeli Authorities in a solution to the problem. It was agreed that the "Black Hebrews" who were sentenced to be expelled, should be divided into two groups: those holding U.S. citizenship and those who had given up such citizenship. As to the first group, it was agreed that if such a person came before the American Consul and requested to return, but claimed that he had no means at his disposal to finance the journey, then the Consul would contact members of the family in the U.S. and would ask them to come to the person's aid. If the response were negative, the U.S. Government would lend the person the required amount of money.

As to the second group of persons who wanted to return to the U.S., such a person would have to apply for an immigration visa, which would be granted by the American Consulate. At the same time, the U.S. Government did not agree to finance in any way the return of such a person to the U.S.

Those proposals, too, far from being satisfactory, were not implemented de facto, both because of the evasion of the American Authorities from furthering the matter, as well as because of lack of pressure on the part of the Israel Government, which from the start had conducted the negotiations on a relatively low level, instead of addressing its arguments and demands to a senior level in the U.S. Administration.

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Mass Infiltration into Israel.

Since 1974, after the decline in the number of attempted expulsions, as a result of the factors outlined before, the Authorities began to put emphasis on the prevention of entry of new "Black Hebrews" into the country. In accordance with instructions by the Minister of Interior "who is empowered by virtue of para. 10 a of the law of entry into Israel (1952) to refuse entry to anyone who is found not to be entitled to enter the country" a procedure was worked out on how to prevent the entry of the members of the sect into this country.

In accordance with that procedure, the Israel police carries out a thorough^hcheck-up on all negroes who want to enter Israel, at entry points into the State. Inter alia, the passport of the individual and the extent of its validity are checked, he is required to produce the return ticket to his country of origin, whether he is in possession of reasonable financial means, and the purpose for which the person wants to visit Israel. It is also endeavoured to find out the background of the person in his country of origin, and only after it is certain that his arrival in the country is solely for the purpose of a visit, and that it is not his intention to join the sect of the "Black Hebrews", his entry is permitted.

This procedure has caused, more than once, grave and embarrassing results. It has happened that individuals and groups of negroes, who came here bona fide, were expelled to the U.S., and when they returned home they created a wave of protests. Sometimes this offended good friends of Israel, even those who had been invited by Government Ministries and public organizations in this country. Among those affected were: Clergymen, University lecturers, sportsmen, artists, and others.

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In the "JERUSALEM POST" OF January 19, 1978, in an article on the "Black Hebrews", there appears the story of Lou Ghost, ^{aka SS-T} hero of the TV series "Roots", who states that he had been interrogated at Lod Airport six times, and in one case a gun was even pointed at his head).

Stories of this nature, which were disseminated by the media in the U.S., hurt Israel's image and caused harm and embarrassment, which were emphasized and discussed by officials of the Foreign Ministry (State Department ?) and representatives of Jewish organizations in the U.S. in their evidence before the Commission.

At the same time, the method turned out to be only partially effective. The followers of the sect revealed conspiratorial inventive power, that was greatly developed, and in all sorts of ways they got the better of the Israeli Immigration (entry) officials. They all saw to it that they were properly equipped with return tickets and with sufficient money for their stay in Israel. Some of them came here disguised as groups of pilgrims who wanted to visit the "holy places" in Nazareth; soon after their arrival those groups disappeared. Others pretended to be participants at scientific conferences and various religious conventions. Such a phony convention was, for instance, organized by representatives of the "Black Hebrews" who are active in Africa. They provided passports, flight tickets, and even enjoyed foreign currency given to them as a special allotment to anyone who participates at a conference or a seminar in Israel.

Those journeys, under the camouflage of conferences and 'advanced studies' (courses), are well planned in order to avoid suspicion both on the part of the country from which they come and on the part of the Israel Authorities. For instance: at first only the men come here, and after they are "acclimatized", they send instructions to their

families to join them. Sometimes the members of the sect succeed in taking in Israeli institutions abroad, and these recommend the issue of visitors visas to Israel. Once, as a result of such a recommendation, three negroes arrived in Israel in order to work on a kibbutz as volunteers. As soon as they arrived, they disappeared without a trace.

The common denominator of all those infiltrators was that they remained in this country and eventually arrived at the "Black Hebrews" centers in the South.

Failure on the part of Senior Governmental Levels
to take the problem seriously.

One of the grave shortcomings in the way the Authorities handled the affair of the "Black Hebrews" is the fact that throughout the long period of the sojourn of the sect in Israel, until the appointment of the Commission by the Minister of Interior, no debate whatsoever took place on Ministerial level in order to decide on the relationship and manner in which the sect should be treated.

It was only after eight years since the first batch of "Black Hebrews" had arrived in Israel that the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, on November 7, 1977, summoned the Directors-General of the Ministries of Labor, Health, Housing and Social Welfare, the Deputy Directors-General of the Ministry of Interior, the Foreign Ministry, and additional senior officials. At that session a comprehensive debate on the problem and its implications was held for the first time. All the participants were unanimously of the opinion concerning the gravity of the situation and its implications for the foreign relations of the State of Israel and its image in the world. Concerning the desired solution, all rejected the possibility of expulsion of the members of the sect from this country, and the

majority of those present proposed to grant them some kind of status, making absolutely sure to prevent additional "Black Hebrews" from joining those who already live in Israel.

Following the session, the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry sent a letter to the Foreign Minister in which he included the agreement reached on granting those "Black Hebrews" who are already in Israel the status of "temporary resident", a matter that would make it possible to allot them housing, health and educational services. Mr. Evron emphasized that "it is impossible to continue the present situation, which is intolerable from the humanitarian, moral, public and political points of view". He warned that "lack of handling (the problem) causes harm to the State and serves the propaganda machine of our enemies". As mentioned before, that was the only Governmental debate in which there was an overall relationship to the problem.

Activity of the Jewish Organizations in the U.S.

In the fall of 1977 a number of Jewish organizations in the U.S. were called upon to help in dealing with the "Black Hebrews". Their awakening to the issue came in view of the systematic and vicious propaganda campaign conducted by the leadership of the sect in the U.S. against the Israel Government, the arrows of which were also directed, with a strong anti-semitic tune, at the Jews in the U.S. The relations between the black community and the Jews in the U.S. had had their ups and downs in the course of the years, and the Jewish leadership was apprehensive about the possibility of a further deterioration to the point of destruction of the delicate and complex fabric of relations. Both the friends of Israel and of the Jews within the black community voiced their warning about the negative relationship and about

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the lack of action on the part of the Israel Authorities concerning the handling of the problem. Particularly active on this subject was one of the most important black leaders among the Trade Unions and a sworn friend of Israel, Bayard Rustin. Rustin, who heads the organization BASIC (Black Americans in Support of Israel) made many efforts to reduce the tension on the subject of the "Black Hebrews" and to reach an agreement that would be acceptable to both sides. To that end he visited Israel several times and met with members of the Government and with the leadership of the sect in Dimona. He also roped in to his assistance the three respectable Jewish organizations in the U.S.:

American Jewish Committee

American Jewish Congress

and Anti-Defamation League of B'nay B'rith.

Representatives of these organizations met in New York in February 1978 with four representatives of BASIC, who had participated in a tour of Israel a few months previously and on that occasion had also talked with the leaders of the "Black Hebrews". At a meeting that was called by Israel's friend, Mrs. Miriam Logan, Chairman of a body called "Human Rights Committee in New York", there also participated three representatives of of sect "Black Hebrews" who travelled to the U.S. for that purpose. Also present at that meeting was the representative of the General Federation of Jewish Workers (Histadrut) in the U.S. and Canada, Uri Sabag.

The representatives of the Jewish organizations and BASIC were worried, at the time, by a sharp, negative report which had been distributed in the U.S. by a mission, headed by Clergyman KINLOCK, that had visited Israel in December 1977 in order to study the living

conditions of the "Black Hebrews" in Israel. The group was representative of a body called "Committee for the eradication of racism" of the Church Council in New York.

At a meeting held by the delegation with Minister of Interior, Dr. Josef Burg, on December 26, 1977, the members claimed that their interest in the sect was purely humanitarian, and that their organization is aware of every humanitarian problem, including the difficult plight of the Jews in the Soviet Union. They complained about the difficult conditions in which the "Black Hebrews" were living and requested a quick solution of the problem. The Minister of Interior explained Israel's immigration policy. Israel was prepared to grant a status to people coming here bona fide, but is unable to acquiesce in mass immigration of groups whose ideology is demonstratively anti-Israel. The Minister pointed out that the U.S. Government is also not prepared to agree to uncontrolled/mass immigration of Chinese to San Francisco or of Mexicans to South California. The Minister of Interior informed the delegation that the Government was considering the setting-up of a Commission which was to recommend proposals for the solution of the problem. Despite these explanations, the delegation published (as mentioned before) a most critical report about the Israel Government, accusing it of a gross violation of elementary human rights in its treatment of the "Black Hebrews". That report had negative implications in U.S. public opinion, and served as yet another accelerator for the holding of the "appeasement meeting" in New York.

At the meeting it was agreed upon to propose to the Israel Government and to the Histadrut the following recommendations, which were included in a letter, dated February 17, 1978, to the Minister of Interior on behalf of the three organizations:

- a. Membership in the Histadrut should be granted to all "Black Hebrews" living in Israel, thus enabling them to receive medical services through the organizations sick funds.
- b. The Histadrut should approach the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare with the request to grant the members of the sect the right to work through official labor exchange offices.
- c. The Histadrut should enable the "Black Hebrews" to enjoy all the educational and cultural services enjoyed by Histadrut members, including the cultivation of the ensemble "Envoys of the Soul".
- d. A comprehensive discussion to be held with the Minister of Interior about aid to the sect in the realization of its aspiration to establish a kibbutz that would be a national center for growing "health food".

The writers also point out that at the meeting full agreement was reached concerning the need for the leadership of the sect to publish a declaration in which they would specify in detail the aims of the sect, while expressing their desire to be an organic part of the State and good citizens with equal rights and duties. That declaration should also contain an undertaking that, after the determination of the status of the members of the sect, its leadership would not permit additional people to join it in an illegal manner.

The applicants recommended that, as a first step of goodwill, even before a full solution was reached, to enable those "Black Hebrews" who had been expelled and left their families behind in Israel: women and children, to visit their families for a short period. The black leaders present at the meeting were prepared to guarantee personally for the return of the visitors to the U.S.

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Finally it was emphasized in the recommendations that, in order to enable a dialogue and fruitful negotiations, both parties - the spokesmen of the Israel Government and the leaders of the "Black Hebrews" - were to abstain from public mutual criticism for a period of six months.

The Minister of Interior never replied to that letter; however, the contents had results in a number of spheres.

The leadership of the sect ceased to indulge in public attacks against Israel and the Jews in all media. (Although, as already mentioned, the propagandistic onslaught continued in other ways). Moreover, on March 7, 1978, in the memorandum sent to Rustin, Shalik Ben Yehuda informed him that "now the two communities in Israel are at last united in a spirit of justice and brotherhood, and the members of our community will be prepared to serve as Goodwill Ambassadors, for the benefit of Israel, throughout the world". In that memorandum the writer expresses the agreement of the "Black Hebrews" to the agreement reached in New York, (according to him in Dimona), according to which they would join the Histadrut as members; they would be granted full civic rights with all that this entails; an undertaking that every new member to be accepted by the sect only after he (she) has undergone immigration procedure in accordance with the law; and finally - their agreement to refrain from voicing criticism against the Israel Government during seven months.

In accordance with the agreement, the Histadrut decided to receive the "Black Hebrews" as members of the Histadrut "for humanitarian reasons, because it is impossible to put up with the fact that they should be discriminated against from the points of view of wages, social conditions and work conditions".

If the truth be told, this joining of the Histadrut did not result

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in farreaching implications for the improvement of the living conditions of the members of the sect. Although their right to receive medical treatment within the framework of Kupat Holim (Sick Fund) was recognized, but in any case, as mentioned before, the "Black Hebrews" refrain from making use of the organized health services and prefer the use of "Natural" means of healing. There has been no change in conditions of work, wages, and professional protection. Admittedly, the Histadrut placed at the disposal of the sect a place in Dimona for cultural activities; however, all in all, their joining the Histadrut did not have any practical significance, though it did have a certain psychological value. At any rate, the Histadrut was proud of having adopted the "Black Hebrews" to its ranks, and at the May 1 parade in 1978 the group that came from Dimona, with their colorful garments, constituted the main attraction.

The setting up of the Public Commission
by the Minister of Interior.

The factor which eventually induced the Government to act for the solution of the problem of the "Black Hebrews" was the initiative of Knesset Member Jacques Amir (Mayor of Dimona) who, on March 13, 1978, tabled a motion for the agenda in the Knesset on the subject of the problem of the "Black Hebrews" in Dimona, Arad and Mitzpeh Rimón.

In the explanatory notes on the motion it says:

"The above-mentioned group has been living in our country for ten years. It has no civic status and its situation is not clear. A lot has been talked and told about the substance of that group, both in the international and in the Israeli press. Their housing living conditions are incompatible with a democratic State that takes care of its citizens and inhabitants. Before this problem

takes on proportions beyond its true weight, it is necessary to put the problem on the agenda of the Knesset with a view to finding an appropriate and humane solution. The State of Israel knew how, with love and humanitarianism, to save Vietnamese refugees, and there is no reason why the State of Israel should not be able to cope with the problem of "the Black Hebrews".

The proposal was referred by the Knesset plenum to the Committee of Internal Affairs and Ecology for debate which, at the end of its discussions, recommended the establishment of a Commission in order to examine the problem. In view of that recommendation, the Minister of Interior appointed the Commission on August 4, 1978.

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PART II.

1. CONCLUSIONS

Handling by the National Authorities.

1. The problem of the "Black Hebrews", the way it exists today, is mainly the result of a chain of mistakes committed by the Israel Government during the last ten years. It would not have arisen at all, if the entry of the first large group in December 1969 had been prevented.
2. The approval of the entry of the first groups derived primarily from political motivations, because of the apprehension of the then Minister of Interior and his Deputy that the Authorities might be accused of racism towards blacks who regarded themselves as Jews - an accusation to which they showed particular sensitivity against the background of the discussion around the problem of: "Who is a Jew"?
3. It would have been possible and necessary to foil the attempt at immigration by the "Black Hebrews" into this country in that same spring. Governmental factors in Israel knew all the time that the members of the sect, despite their pretense, were not Jews and were not entitled to enjoy the privileges of immigration and citizenship in accordance with the Law of Return - 1950.
4. The explanation for the prevention of the entry of the "Black Hebrews" into Israel in accordance with the Law of Entry into Israel - 1952 could at the time have been supported by the following reasons:
 - a. Every State, whatever its regime, preserves its right quite painstakingly to prevent foreigners from entering its territory.
 - b. As a matter of fact, there is no State that is prepared to absorb large groups of people who are not refugees and are not without a homeland.

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- c. Every year, the State of Israel enables also non-Jews to settle permanently in this country, without any discrimination on the grounds of color of skin, religion or nationality; however, it is inconceivable that the State should submit to the dictate of a pressure group which takes the unilateral decision to settle in Israel.
- d. The State of Israel has a primary obligation towards Jews to whom the Law of Return applies. The State, which grapples with difficult problems of existence, has the right and the duty to determine priorities concerning immigration to this country, and to avoid taking upon itself the heavy burden of absorbing large groups of citizens and inhabitants of a foreign State.
5. Since the Government did not take that road, it would have been its duty - immediately after the verification of the nature of the sect and its ideology, trying to undermine the State and Zionism - to return the "Black Hebrews", whose number at the time did not exceed 200, to their country of origin, viz. the U.S.
6. It was prohibitive to acquiesce in the U.S. Government's washing its hands of the responsibility for the members of the sect and its regarding the problem as "an Internal Israeli affair". That attitude of the American Government is unacceptable in relations between two friendly States, nor is it compatible with the rules of international law.
7. Instead of adopting the measures outlined above, the Israel Government preferred to adopt an ostrich policy of "It's preferable to sit tight and do nothing". A label of "tolerated" was stuck on the "Black Hebrews" while ignoring their existence. Instead of dealing profoundly with the roots of the problem, the Authorities concentrated on activities

for the prevention of the entry into this country of additional members of the sect. These attempts failed almost totally. In all sorts of devious and deceptive ways hundreds of "Black Hebrews" succeeded in infiltrating into Israel; their numbers swelled constantly, and today the sect numbers about 1,500 persons.

8. On the other hand, the 'strong-hand policy' adopted in checking at entry ports into Israel against all black visitors created a stink and caused the State a bad name with many friends and also caused a good deal of harm to Israel's foreign relations.
9. Despite appeals and repeated warnings voiced by local factors in Dimona and Arad - the large concentrations of the sect - no comprehensive debate was held throughout these years on a Ministerial level on the problem and ways and means to deal with it.

Living Conditions, Relations with Neighbors, and Legal, Social and Political Aspects,

As a result of the Government's policy, which on the one hand acquiesced de fact in the sojourn of the "Black Hebrews" in the country, but on the other hand refused to grant them any kind of recognized status, a very difficult reality has been created which has grave implications from the legal, social, humanitarian and political aspects.

1. In this country there exists today a group of 1,500 men and women, devoid of any status, who are all "offenders against the law" because of their being in Israel illegally. They all received tourist visas for a period of three months, which were not extended and whose effectiveness has expired a long time ago. This state of affairs is intolerable and would not be tolerated in any State.
2. No exact information on the number of members of the sect is available, nor is there any registration of their identity or place of residence.

The "Black Hebrews" do not carry any official identity card or similar document, a matter which eo ipso is a violation of the law. In addition, this fact makes it difficult - to the point of impossible - for the police to pursue any member of the sect suspected of having committed a criminal offense.

- 3 The lack of means of identification, and in any case the lack of supervision, control and follow-up by the police enables criminal elements from foreign States , particularly the US, to arrive in Israel and to "disappear" in one of the centers of the sect. It is known that a number of wanted criminals in the U.S. have indeed done so, and in the midst of the black community in this country the State of Israel got a name of being "a country of refuge" where it is easy to find shelter from the outstretched arm of the law.
4. The Authorities are not prepared to grant the privilege of housing to the "Black Hebrews". For that reason, and because of natural increase of that population, and the addition of large groups that have arrived here illegally, conditions have been created in the centers of the sect - Dimona, Ard and Mitzpeh Rimon - of the most severe crowdedness, up to thirty or more persons in one apartment.
5. This phenomenon is a shame for the State of Israel, which quite rightly has been proud of its endeavor to maintain proper standards of housing for its inhabitants. The housing conditions of the "Black Hebrews" are far below the red line, and only because of their blind adherence to the principles of the sect and their leadership they manage to maintain a reasonable standard of living under utterly intolerable conditions.
6. As a result of the terrible crowdedness in the dwellings of the "Black Hebrews" the quality of life in the residential quarters

where they live in the neighborhood of Jewish tenants has dropped drastically. This is, no doubt, factor no. 1 for the bad relations between the Jewish community and the members of the sect. No amount of goodwill on either side can overcome the environmental nuisance and hardships, caused by such a state of density and crowdedness. The Jewish inhabitants are leaving the mixed residential quarters if only they can find a buyer of their apartment, even at a price of heavy loss., but even so it is almost impossible to find anyone who would be prepared to live there. It is no wonder, therefore, that there has been a significant escalation in the tension between the members of the two communities; one can only be thankful that so far there has been no violent explosion.

7. The crowded conditions are liable any day to bring about an outbreak of epidemic diseases. It is a miracle that this has not happened so far, though Jewish tenants in the mixed quarters do complain about the existence of such diseases.
8. "The Black Hebrews" refuse to receive orderly medical treatment and prefer "natural" means of healing. They are members of the sick fund of the Histadrut, but in reality they make no use of the services offered.
9. There is absolutely no hygienic control over the members of the sect, and the employees of the ^{public} health services get no cooperation from them.
10. There is no registration of the births; the deliveries are performed, in the air-raid shelters of the houses in which the "Black Hebrews" live, by the midwives of the sect; there is no reporting to the Ministries of Health or Interior about deaths - as required by law.
11. The "Black Hebrews" maintain an independent educational system, outside the national framework, and the Ministry of Education and Culture has no influence - not even the slightest - on this subject;

a phenomenon which constitutes a violation of the laws of education customary in Israel.

12. In the sphere of employment, too, there exists a continuous violation of the law on the part of the employers, who employ members of the sect, and on the part of the workers themselves. Any person who stays in Israel by virtue of a tourist visa is obligated to obtain a special permit from the Minister of Interior as a condition of his employment. Such a permit has never been given to the "Black Hebrews", even when there were some among them who had valid visas; today when all members of the sect are living in Israel illegally, their employment is prohibited.
13. One must not complain about the employers - who include the Local Council of Mitzpeh Rimon - who employ the "Black Hebrews" contrary to the law; for if they didn't, the sect would starve; however, some of them exploit the situation in order to give the members of the sect a dirty deal as regards wages and social conditions.
14. The Government's policy in regard to employment is also vague. There are no instructions from higher authority to the offices of the Labor Exchange how to act in this matter, and in at least one instance the Director of the Employment Service in Arad - one of the strongest objectors to the sect on personal grounds - who applies the law very rigidly, and on every occasion stops the work of members of the sect in Arad.
15. The subject of the personal status of the "Black Hebrews" is also unsettled, from the legal point of view. From the legal aspect, there is complete anarchy in everything concerning the bonds of a couple and the establishment of such bond. Wedlock and divorce in the customary sense, do not exist at all among the sect.

There is no lawful registration of marriages and divorces, and in view of the aforesaid, there is no legal validity to such registration.

The Political and Social Aspect.

1. The group that is called "Black Hebrews" is a sect (cult) with all the characteristic which distinguish cults in ever increasing numbers during the last decade, particularly in the U.S. The sect is headed by a charismatic leader, Ben-Ami Carter, who exercises an autocratic regime over the members of his community, without any restraints. Carter alone determines their way of life and of every individual of the community, sets norms of behavior and metes out sanctions for their infringement.
2. It has not been proved to the Commission that there exist means of corporal punishment, but there is no doubt that there exists a system of social sanctions (e.g. "excommunication" and "exile") which have a considerable effect on those punished, because of their gravity, if one takes into consideration the coercion and pressure which are a matter of course if one lives within the special framework of the sect.
3. The sect preserves its secluded character, and its members do not maintain any contact, except for that essential to their livelihood, with the outside world. All contacts and connections with the Authorities and public bodies are exclusively made and maintained by Ben-Ami Carter, even if other members of the leadership are "pro forma" also signatories to applications and letters on behalf of the sect.

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4. It is difficult to determine whether the motivations of the leaders of the sect are indeed "pure". There are those who think that they are motivated by a sense of "mission"; others regard them as Charlatans, who are after power and money. At the same time there is no doubt that all the "Black Hebrews" follow their leader "blindly", in the firm belief in his genuineness and in the ideological truth of the sect. Nor is there any doubt that this blind trust is the result of indoctrination and brain washing, that has been going on for a long time.
5. More than once have the "Black Hebrews" been accused of widespread criminal activity in this country. The Commission has not found any confirmation of this accusation, and it seems that the rate of crime within the sect is lower than the "norm" in Israel. The main reason for that is the aspiration of the sect to keep "a low profile", in order not to give the Authorities any pretext to expel them from this country.
6. On the other hand, there exists - according to all signs - criminal activity by members of the sect in the U.S. The legal authorities in the U.S. have conducted and are still conducting long drawn-out investigations in connection with suspected commitments of crimes, e.g. theft, embezzler and fraude on a scale of millions of dollars by "Black Hebrews" who disappeared from the U.S. in the direction of this country. These activities were apparently destined to finance the sect in Israel.
7. The Commission does not share the opinion that the very presence of the sect in Israel constitutes an acute and significant security risk ; however, at the same time it is clear that the existence

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of such a sect with its various characteristics, including its special ideology and motivation, obligate the security authorities to be constantly on the alert in regard to the goings-on within that sect.

3. The ideology of the "Black Hebrews" is based on the belief that they are the "true" Jews directly descending from the Ten Tribes, and that the Jewish People is "a fake".
9. It is reasonable to assume that from the beginning the leadership of the sect regarded their return to Liberia - the independent Black State in Africa - the solution to their national and religious problem, and the "Black Hebrews" as the bridgehead of broad settlement of blacks from the U.S. in that country. For the purpose of implementing that aim, the members of the sect migrated to Liberia; however, after they had gone through most serious difficulties in their absorption, the leadership performed an "ideological about-turn" (re-training) , and shifted the ideological point of gravity to Israel.

Now the "Black Hebrews" claim that Eretz-Israel is their historical "homeland" and country of origin, which the Zionists had illegally "taken over". Their aim, which they have proclaimed not so long ago, is to move all Blacks in the world, who will identify with the principles of the sect, to this country.

10. The "Black Hebrews" are not Jews, not according to any criterion, even the most liberal. This has been determined by the religious-legal authorities in Israel quite unequivocally. This verdict was supported by the Supreme Court (Bagatz Clerk v. Minister of Interior). The customs of the "religion" of the "Black Hebrews" are a concoction of ceremonies and rituals, in which one can recognize

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a strong Christian influence, with a mixture of Jewish and even Moslem elements.

11. The "Black Hebrews" conducted, in the course of all the years until the middle of 1978, an anti-Israeli propaganda campaign in this country and in the U.S., which found its expression in appeals to various public factors in the world, including factors hostile to Israel, and also to the communications media. Quite frequently the attacks against the Israeli Authorities took on a sharp and vicious character, and even swerved to open anti-semitism against the Jews in the U.S.
12. In 1978, following a kind of agreement between the "Black Hebrews" and large Jewish organizations in the U.S., the public attacks against the State of Israel ceased, but the leadership of the sect secretly continued to address appeals to various international factors in its denunciation of Israel.

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B. ALTERNATIVES FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

The Commission has contemplated a great many proposals concerning a solution of the problem of the "Black Hebrews". Each one of the alternatives is difficult and is far from being a perfect solution for this complicated problem. Each has advantages and disadvantages, with the balance of considerations for better or for worse tend with great difficulty to either side. The alternatives are:

- a. To leave the present situation as is;
- b. To expel the sect from this country;
- c. To leave the sect in Israel.

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While the adoption of the alternatives (a) and (b) makes a complete and total treatment possible, a solution in the spirit of the third alternative enables an implementation in a number of variables, which we will go into later on.

1. Leaving the present situation as is.

The perpetuation of the status quo, i.e. adoption of a policy of non-intervention, on the assumption that "time will do its bit" and that "somehow" the problem will find its solution, is the least acceptable alternative, for the following reasons:

- a. The relations between the "Black Hebrews" and their neighbors have reached a crisis point. A continuation of the present situation would be an invitation to incidents of violence with unforeseeable consequences.
- b. Acquiescence in the dismal living conditions of the members of the sect would leave a mark of disgrace on the conscience of the State and every enlightened citizen in it, and those conditions are like oil on the propaganda wheels of every inimical and hostile factor against Israel.
- c. It is inconceivable that in the State of Israel there should live thousands of people devoid of any status, outside the framework of the law, while daily violating legal norms in various spheres.
- d. If the treatment of "Black Hebrews" as "tolerated persons" continues, the Authorities will actually be deprived of any possibility to control and regulate the growth of the sect and to ensure for it an existence within a positive, normative framework.

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- e. There will be an increasing risk that the sect may become a focus of criminal activity and a security threat at those places where it is concentrated and even beyond them.

2. Expulsion from the Country.

This is perhaps the most "popular" solution from the viewpoint of public opinion in this country and this is also recommended by the Israel Police; this is based on the following grounds, as specified in the report of the Department of Special Duties of January 1978:

- a. There is no precedent to a situation in which a group numbering hundreds of persons should immigrate into the State, remaining there illegally, while adopting an outlook of denying that State's existence. Every State makes use of its right to limit immigration to it and to remove from it persons who live in it illegally.
- b. The expulsion of the sect would constitute a partial or total solution of the legal, social and political problem.
- c. Together with the expulsion of the "Black Hebrews" from the country, there would disappear - in the course of time - the motivation for propaganda against Israel.
- d. There would no longer be any need for limitations and examinations of black visitors at the ports of entry to Israel, a phenomenon that causes unpleasantness to the Authorities.
- e. It would be possible to carry out the ^{planned} expulsion in a/multi-stage manner, which would limit the difficulty of the expulsion by the fact that in the first stage the leaders of the sect would be expelled, something that would affect its immunity and would cause its disintegration.

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The apprehension about negative public opinion that would follow the expulsion can be considerably limited by an explanatory campaign that would emphasize, inter alia, the following points:

- 1) The State of Israel exercises its right, like any other sovereign State, to expel peoples living in it illegally.
- 2) There is no connection between the color of the negroes' skin and the intention to expel them; they would have been expelled even if the color of their skin were completely different.
- 3) The "Black Hebrews" deny the existence of the State of Israel, and it is their intention to organize mass immigration of negroes from the U.S. and from Africa, thus endangering Israel's security.
- 4) The "Black Hebrews" have offended the hospitality they enjoyed with their arrival here by maintaining an independent legal system in contravention of the law, and vicious anti-Israeli propaganda, and by adopting methods of deception for the purpose of smuggling persons into the country en masse.
- 5) The "Black Hebrews" also have an anti-American ideology forecasting holocaust and destruction for all Western countries.
- 6) The State of Israel has absorbed Jewish refugees from all over the world; in Israel there exists a problem of Palestinian refugees, and a prolonged political and military struggle with Arab States. As a result of its particular situation, Israel cannot take upon

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itself the additional burden of the problems relating to thousands of black migrants.

These are the advantages indicated by those who are in favor of expelling the "Black Hebrews" from Israel. On the other hand, those against that proposal put forward the following reasons:

- a. It would have been possible to justify expulsion for all the above-mentioned reasons, during the first period of the "Black Hebrews" sojourn in this country. Today, ten years and more after the arrival of the first group in Israel, we have missed the right moment, and we have, unfortunately, to pay the price for the shortcomings and mistakes of the Government during that period.
- b. The expulsion of the sect would arouse negative public opinion throughout the world to such an extent as cannot be estimated in advance. This refers not only to the enemies and rivals of Israel, whose opinion on Israel is negative anyway, but it also goes for States and publics that are friendly towards Israel.
- c. The anti-Israeli propaganda will increase even more because of the color of the skin of the members of the sect. The motivation of their expulsion would be described as racist - a claim that is liable to fall on listening ears in African States and among the black population in the U.S.
- d. Leaders of large Jewish organizations in the U.S. have warned against the serious implications of the act of expulsion for the relations between the negroes and the Jews in the U.S. There exists the apprehension that the delicate fabric of relations between the two communities would be completely undermined

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following an expulsion of the sect, and Israel's cause would be harmed even among Israel's friends, among the black leadership in the U.S.

- e. There exist enormous practical difficulties in the expulsion of hundreds of people, incl. women and children, to another country, when there already exists the political and legal problem concerning the expulsion of persons who voluntarily have given up their American citizenship.
- f. It cannot be assumed that the "Black Hebrews" would voluntarily acquiesce in their expulsion from this country. The strong motivation, the iron discipline and blind obedience to the orders of their leaders are liable to cause a tragedy that would play havoc with the conscience of those responsible for the expulsion. It is prohibitive to close one's eyes to that possibility.
- g. In any case, there will be Jews in Israel and abroad, including those who had themselves been victims of persecution and expulsion, who would shrink from the idea of mass expulsion of men, women and children - no matter how negative the posture vis a vis the sect may be.

3. Leaving the Sect in Israel.

The third alternative is, to leave the "Black Hebrews" in this country, combined with a partial or total solution of the difficult problems which their sojourn in Israel has created. The advantages v. the disadvantages of this alternative are in principle the opposite of the reasons for and against the expulsion of the "Black Hebrews" from this country.

The viewpoint of those opposed to this possibility can be outlined,

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in essence, as follows:

- a. The perpetuation of a situation in which a group remains permanently in the country, whose outlook (Weltanschauung) denies the existence of the Jewish State in Israel.
- b. The "Black Hebrews" constitute a potential of a security threat, and in Israel's situation this is of special significance.
- c. The sect is liable to constitute a center of criminal activity, and to require constant and increasing police supervision.
- d. The very existence of a sect, which maintains foreign and strange norms of behavior, is incompatible with the character of Israeli society.
- e. Any such solution would impose on the State a financial burden which has no justification from the moral point of view, at a time when Israel's economic difficulties are steadily increasing.

Those in support of leaving the sect in the country claim the following advantages:

- a. There would be an end to the intolerable phenomenon of the illegal presence of "Black Hebrews" in this country.
- b. There would be an end to the phenomenon of a large public in Israel is actually living outside the framework and control of the law, combined with a continual infringement of the laws of the State.
- c. The legal authorities, primarily the police, would be able to supervise the "Black Hebrews", after they are given a status that would regularize their means of identification.
- d. The serious phenomena deriving from the grave situation in which the members of the sect live, i.e. housing, sanitation,

employment, etc. would be curbed and perhaps completely disappear. Thus it would become more easy, for the inhabitants living in the residential quarters and for the Local Authorities of those quarters.

- e. The wind would be taken out of the sails of anti-Israeli propaganda in connection with this problem.
- f. Israel's image in world public opinion, especially in the U.S., would improve, and this is also likely to contribute to the strengthening of the bond with friendly factors among the black community in America.

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C. R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S.

1. The Commission has decided to recommend that the "Black Hebrews" be left in Israel.

This conclusion has been arrived at after eliminating the only other alternative that might have been considered, viz. the expulsion of the sect from this country.

The reasons pro and contra such an expulsion have already been mentioned, and the Commission has decided that the negative reasons are stronger. The Commission has not come to that conclusion easily. The recommendation to leave the "Black Hebrews" in this country is to be regarded as the "lesser evil" - the less grave alternative as regards its implementation and implications. In everybody's opinion, this is not an ideal solution. As has already been pointed out it would have been possible and necessary, from all points of views, for all those reasons mentioned in the report, to put an end to the phenomenon of the immigrating "Black Hebrews" to Israel

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and to nip it in the bud, and to expel the first group that came to this country. Once the opportunity was missed, its opportune moment disappeared; expulsion now is liable to cause Israel's image in the world and among the Jewish community in the U.S. unimaginable harm, on top of the practical difficulties and the moral misgivings involved in the implementation of such a mass expulsion of men, women and children.

At the same time, from the conclusion to leave the sect in this country follows the obligation to take a series of actions, that will curtail or do away with the serious problems that have been created in relation to the "Black Hebrews".

2. Granting of Status to the Members of the Sect.

The Commission recommends that the members of the sect be given recognized legal status in accordance with the law of entry to Israel, 1952.

The granting of status in accordance with the law will abolish the intolerable state of affairs in which the "Black Hebrews" live in this country as trespassers of the law; it will put them within the framework of the laws of the State as regards registration of population, employment, education, health, etc. and will make possible their identification and location by the legal authorities. It will also express the recognition of the State of the fact of their residence and absorption in Israel.

It is right that such a granting of status be done in accordance with the rules laid down by the law of entry to Israel - 1952, and regulations of entry to Israel - 1974, issued in accordance therewith, in combination with the adoption of a liberal attitude.

in application of the rules and regulations, taking into consideration the particular nature of the problem. This requires the following recommendations:

- a. The "Black Hebrews" are not Jews, according to the aspects laid down in the law, and one must not apply to them the rules and special regulations concerning citizenship and registration of population referring to Jews.

To those, who do not enjoy citizenship by virtue of the law of return, the law of entry to Israel apply, and its regulations constitute a multi-stage runway, beginning with the issue of a visitor's visa, and its possible final stage the granting of full citizenship.

- b. The Commission recommends that members of the sect, who have been in Israel for less than 27 months, and who do not have a visitor's visa, (or a visa that has expired) should be given such a permit (B/2) which should be extended by the Ministry of Interior up to the end of 27 months from the date of their entry to Israel. At the same time they should be given a work permit (B/1) with a date of effect also up to the end of 27 months, all this after the requirements of the law have been met, requiring the signing of an agreement of employment with the employer and a recommendation by the employment service or other Governmental institution. It is essential that such a recommendation be given without procrastination and delay. After the end of the period of 27 months, they are to be given the status of old - temporary-resident. This status is not mentioned in the various regulations governing the entry to Israel. The regulations mention temporary residence Category A/1 (potential immigrant); category A/2 (students); and A/3 (Clergy).

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Nevertheless, the Ministry of Interior customarily recognizes, by virtue of the law of entry to Israel, special cases of the further status of "old - temporary". The permit to stay in Israel of ^{an} "old-temporary" resident can be extended indefinitely, and gives the holder the right to an identity card and work without the need for a special permit.

- c. A "Black Hebrew" who has lived in this country for more than 27 months will also be granted a status of "old-temporary" and will be given a permit to stay in Israel for a period of two years (and this also goes for the first group to which the contents of para. b. apply).

After the end of two years, the members of the sect will be given a permit of permanent residence, after consultation and decision of the Inter-Ministerial Committee dealing with applications for permanent residence in this country.

- d. The recommendations outlined in paras. b. and c. do not apply automatically to every member of the sect collectively. In every case the status will be given individually, in accordance with the criteria customary, mentioned in para. 9 of the regulations of entry to Israel.

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That paragraph lays down the authority of the Minister of Interior, according to his judgment, to refuse a permit of residence, or to cancel a visa or permit of residence that has been given, inter alia if:

- 1) the applicant acts or has acted against the Jewish People;
- 2) he is liable to endanger the security of the State;
- 3) he has a criminal past, that is liable to endanger the peace of the public;

4) he is liable to offend the feelings of the public;

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- 5) he is liable to become a burden to public institutions;
- 6) he violates or has violated any law applicable in Israel;
- 7) he has made a false statement in order to obtain a visa or permit to stay, or if he has not complied with the conditions laid down by law or in the regulations or with the conditions required by his application or those laid down as conditions for the approval of his application;
- 8) a person in relation to whom evidence has been received that his coming to Israel is connected with his payment of debts;
- 9) if he is liable to endanger public peace or public health.

Having stipulated that an individual examination be carried out in connection with every case, we desire to emphasize that the above-mentioned criteria are not to be applied arbitrarily and rigidly, for if this were done, not even one member of the sect could obtain a permit of residence in Israel. Certainly, the "Black Hebrews" do not stand the test of para. 9 (7) of the regulations, and it is also possible to apply against them quite easily sub-paragraphs (4), (5) and (6). This is not what the Commission has in mind.

Side by side with the interest that each case be examined in its own right, consideration must be given to the particular problematic of the sect's being in Israel, with the aim to enable the large majority to enjoy a recognized status in the State. At the same time one must not acquiesce under any circumstances in the possibility that - by virtue of the recommendations of the Commission - status be granted to clearly criminal elements who have escaped the law in

their country and have found shelter among the black sect in Israel.

Procedure for granting the Status.

1. This being so, the Commission recommends that each one of the adult members of the sect, as from the age of 16 and upwards, present himself (herself) personally before an authoritative commission at the Ministry of Interior which deals with the granting of permits of residence in this country and which will make a decision in relation to him (her), in accordance with the rules outlined above. As to the children's status, the relevant rule concerning their parents will apply to them.
2. The applicant will present to the commission a passport, or another identifying document on behalf of the American Embassy, to enable his data to be examined, including the date of his entry to Israel. //
3. The commission will grant the applicant a permit of residence in accordance with the regulations after having been convinced that he/she live in this country within the "Black Hebrews" sect of their own free will, without any coercion, and that he/she desires to continue to do so.
4. In every case in which the applicant will express his desire to leave Israel, his request will be granted, after having made a relevant declaration in writing. His travelling expenses to the U.S. will be paid in accordance with an arrangement made with the American Embassy in Israel in July 1976. At the same time influence should be exerted

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on the American Embassy to finance the return trip to the U.S., even of those persons who at the time gave up their American citizenship.

Members of the sect, against whom requests from the U.S. for extradition are pending, because of criminal offenses, will be expelled from Israel.

5. The above-mentioned commission is also required to examine special applications from "Black Hebrews" who have relatives among the sect in Israel and who want to join them. To those the instructions given in para. 6 (d) of regulations of entry to Israel, with the required changes, should apply. This refers to a small number of relatives as defined in the regulations - (marital) partner, a child (minor), and adolescent child, and a parent, all of whom are dependent on the applicant for their livelihood, and in special cases the Commission recommends that their requests for a reunion of families be responded to.
6. On the decision of the commission on behalf of the Ministry of Interior every applicant can appeal to an Inter-Ministerial Commission, who will be entrusted with the implementation of our recommendations (see further down below). In coming to the final decision concerning the fate of applicant's relative, on which member of the sect (part of the Hebrew text does not make sense, it seems that something has been omitted here. Page 63, Hebrew text. Translator's remark), the Minister of Interior will be guided by the recommendation of the Inter-Ministerial Commission.

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7. On receiving a recognized status on behalf of the competent Authorities of the State, in accordance with the above-mentioned rules, it will be possible to identify every one of the members of the sect, and the entire legal system customary in Israel is to be applied to them as regards population registration, education, work, health, national insurance, etc.
8. When it comes to make a decision on the question whether to grant all the "Black Hebrews" or most of them or some of them the right of permanent residence in this country at the end of two years after a permit of temporary residence has been given them as outlined above - the main consideration that should be given attention by the members of the commission on behalf of the Ministry of Interior ought to be the test of observance of the law as will emerge to have been proved in the course of that interim period. This in addition to the examination of all-important the/question of the measure of integration of the sect in this country without endangering the characteristics and security of the State.

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3. The establishment of a Settlement for the Sect.

The Commission recommends that the "Black Hebrews" be transferred to a special Community Settlement.

1. Simultaneously with the granting of a legal status to the members of the sect, the Commission recommends a solution of their population problem, although the implementation of is not to be linked with the implementation of the other.

A beginning is to be made immediately with the implementation of the granting of status, in accordance with the above-mentioned recommendations, while simultaneously taking urgent steps for the implementation of the plan for their resettlement, in accordance of the following (recommendations). In the nature of things, this operation will take more than a short time, but the implementation is to be cut down to a minimum of time necessary.

2. In the opinion of all factors, with which the Commission has come into contact, the "Black Hebrews" must not be left in their present state, while they are populating a number of buildings in the heart of mixed residential quarters in Dimona, Arad and Mitzpeh Rimon. We have extensively described in sufficient detail the hard living conditions in which the members of the sect are dwelling and also the great suffering caused to them and to their neighbors as a result thereof.

There were four possibilities of an alternative solution:

- (a) Additional apartments to be built for the members of the sect in the existing quarters.
- (b) The establishment of an agricultural settlement for the members of the sect.
- (c) The establishment of a community settlement.
- (d) The establishment of a special residential quarter within the framework of one of the Local Authority areas in which they now live.

The first possibility was rejected outright, because it is not realistic. It is physically impossible to allot

within the existing framework additional housing units within the quarters in which the "Black Hebrews" are now living. Moreover, the leaders of the sect have more than once expressed their desire to concentrate all their members in this country in one framework, and it is the opinion of this Commission that this request ought to be responded to, favorably.

The idea of establishing a separate residential quarter within the town area of one of the towns in the South is much more reasonable. Its advantages are clear. It is perhaps the cheapest solution from the financial point of view, for it would save expenses on infrastructure, and would enable the members of the sect to enjoy the existing regular municipal services. The question of employment, too, could be solved more easily. On the other hand, none of the heads of the local authorities got "excited" at this proposal, to make an understatement. Unfortunately, the social conditions have not yet matured sufficiently for a joint life side by side of population groups, whose ways of life are so different from each other. Also, problems have cropped up in regard to municipal services to such a special residential neighborhood, particularly in the sphere of education and other community services.

However, the consideration which was eventually decisive against this proposal was again the wish of the "Black Hebrews" themselves. Their leadership has demanded in no uncertain terms to settle them at a place as separate as possible, far from urban population centers.

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The leaders of the sect would prefer a suitable area to be allotted to them for the establishment of an agricultural settlement in a settlement zone that is not crowded, where they could set up a framework like a Kibbutz, with their main source of livelihood being agricultural plantations.

This possibility is not practicable, in view of limitations of land, water and financial resources; after the signing of a peace treaty with Egypt, the only zone which could have been considered, for the establishment of an agricultural settlement of the members of the sect is the Aravah. However, the establishment of a settlement of that size (about 1500 persons) would necessitate the allotment of larger areas, and the allotment of much larger quantities of water, a particularly rare and costly item in that region.

Also, the establishment of settlements as villages involves vast expenditures. From the organizational point of view, all village settlements belong to the kibbutz movement or Moshav-movement, a fact that makes organizational existence possible - a framework which takes care of investments, loans, collateral guarantees, economic and other aid for the settlements. It is doubtful whether any of these movements would agree to a settlement of the "Black Hebrews" being affiliated to the above-mentioned framework.

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One also has to bear in mind that the attempt at agricultural settlement of the members of the sect in Liberia failed, both because of lack of experience and of the ability to do agricultural physical work.

3. It therefore seems to the Commission that the solution of the problem of settling the "Black Hebrews" lies in the establishment of a community settlement, similar to Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria. The advantage in such a settlement, that would be administered on a communal basis by the sect, like a kibbutz, is that it does not need large areas of land or large quantities of water, like a village settlement. The main source of livelihood of the inhabitants would be "outside work", and therefore such a settlement has to be situated at a reasonable distance from appropriate sources of employment.

The "Black Hebrews" must also be enabled to continue with their engagement in handicraft, artisanship, the kind of work in which they are engaged, quite successfully, today. Such a combination of outside work with small industry and handicraft is likely to be the answer to the employment problem of the members of the sect. They must also be allotted a not very large area for growing organic food, as is their wont.

4. The Commission does not think that it has to indicate exactly the location of the community settlement that is to be established; this is the task of National Authorities concerned. However, what may be given consideration, in our opinion, is the region of Ramat-Hovev

South of Beersheba, which is situated within the framework of the Regional Council of Ramat Hanegev. The settlement ought to be situated close to the mining works (Tarkovet Brom) and other works, which are planned within the framework of Kiryat Hata'assiyah (industrial town) under construction, and it will be the answer to the demand for man-power that is constantly increasing in that region.

5. The establishment of a settlement of that size would require at least two - three years for planning and implementation, however, in order to save time, it would be possible at the first stage to house the settlers in temporary buildings, even caravans, and they are definitely prepared to accept that. Also, the permanent building constructions must be, taking into account the time and cost element, be of standards that would make possible good, fast and relatively cheap building. //
6. The establishment of such a settlement is likely - according to a cautious estimate - to cost between 300 and 400 million Isr.pounds up its final completion. It would be fitting that such a heavy financial burden on the budget be divided among the National Authorities and the sect of the "Black Hebrews". The members of the sect in Israel and particularly in the U.S., as well as many supporters among the black community in the U.S., are prepared to take upon themselves part of the financial burden involved in the establishment of the settlement, and it is necessary that this preparedness - expressed by the leaders of the sect and by their friends in the U.S. to the Chairman of this Commission - be realized in practise. It may perhaps be possible to participate in this special objective the large Jewish organizations in the U.S. which show great interest

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7. With the establishment of the first stage of the settlement it is necessary to ensure - and it is up to the leaders of the sect, primarily Carter, to take upon themselves that responsibility - that all the "Black Hebrews", who are today dispersed in Dimona, Arad, Mitzpeh Rimon and other places, should move to it within a reasonable space of time.

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4. Prevention of Entry of additional "Black Hebrews" into Israel.

The Commission recommends that the leadership of the sect undertake, as
conditio sine qua non, not to add to the community additional migrants
from abroad.

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He also emphasized in a letter to the Minister of Interior, Dr. Joseph Burg, dated January 14, 1979, which is cited hereunder verbatim:

"Subject: The Community of the Black Israeli Hebrews.

First of all, I offer you the blessing of peace. I am writing this

Offer you the blessing of peace. I

letter on behalf of our entire community who live in Dimona, Mitzpeh Rimon and Arad, I wish to express in writing our feeling and posture towards the State of Israel and its inhabitants. First of all, we regard ourselves as Israelis, tied to the fate of the State of Israel spiritually and physically. Therefore, we do not want to do anything that would create problems or would bring embarrassment to the State. That is to say, we are not negative factors for the State today, and will not be such tomorrow. I confess, without going into detail, that at the beginning of our arrival in Israel we had a conception... (at this point in the letter a line seems to have been omitted - Translator's remark) ...

to be a creative and productive community for the benefit of the State. This being so, we request your understanding and assistance and that you may grant us this opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder. You may rest assured that we only want to remain in Eretz Israel and to work (serve ?) our forefathers, Abraham, Yitzhak and Jacob.

We are prepared to agree to just conditions which are for the good of every one. In addition to that, if we are required to do so, we will not add illegally a single person to our community and will continue to try and persuade the State to accept others only by official ways and means. I wish to express our great desire to conclude this chapter, and to turn a new and positive leaf in our relationship. Moreover, the members of our community work for the State of Israel abroad, and could bring enchanting results in America and Africa. I am sure we will stand together, and each of us will benefit from the additional strength. We are in a high state of preparedness to help and to serve.

Respectfully,
(sgd.) Ben Ami Garter.
for the Israeli Community."

In accordance with that letter and verbal conversations, the "Black Hebrews'" are prepared to agree to this condition of not coopting any additional immigrants to the sect without Government approval; they only request that the matter be reconsidered in a few years' time. It must be made clear to the leadership of the sect that their status of permanency in this country also depends on strict fulfilment of these instructions, and in any case, any member of the sect who will be discovered without an official document, after the implementation of the recommendations concerning the granting of recognized status to every one of the sect, is to be expelled without delay.

It is recommended that the Legal Authorities maintain a current supervision over the activities of the "Black Hebrews". Their task will be made easier with the implementation of the recommendations concerning the identification and location of the members of the sect. To that end, it is desirable that, with the transfer of the sect to its new place of residence, a police station be set up at the place.

5. The Establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Commission.

For the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the Commission, we recommend that the Israel Government appoint an Inter-Ministerial Commission, headed by the Director-General of the Ministry of Interior, and with the participation of representatives of the Ministries concerned who should keep track of the implementation of the recommendations, while giving their considered opinion on open questions to which the Commission has not offered answers in this report. We do not delude ourselves that no such questions have remained. The Commission should also serve as an instance for appeal against the decisions by the commission of the Ministry of Interior on the question of status, as mentioned above.

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2. It is fitting that the recommendations of the Commission be brought as soon as possible, by the Minister of Interior, for approval by the Government, and that their implementation be taken in hand immediately, in accordance with the order of priorities indicated by the Commission. The Government is also called upon to appoint a Minister who should be given the responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations,

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S U M M A R Y

Finally, we feel that we owe the Minister of Interior who appointed the Commission, and the public, an explanation for the delay in the submission of this report.

The Minister of Interior appointed the Commission for the examination of the problem of the sect which calls itself the "Black Hebrews", in accordance with the recommendation of the Knesset Committee of Internal Affairs and Ecology, dated August 4, 1978. The Minister requested the Commission to conclude its work and to submit its recommendations within two months. Since then about twenty months have gone by. Right from the start, the time allotted to the Commission was too short, taking into account the nature of the problem, its complexity, and the need to meet with a large number of factors, including visits on the spot. However, not these factors alone are responsible for the delay in the publishing of the conclusions and the recommendations. As a matter of fact, the Commission finished the principal part of its work within seven months, and entrusted the Chairman of the Commission with the task of preparing the report. This work was protracted for two reasons:

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(1) From time to time new information came in, including "classified" material, on the "Black Hebrew" sect, which was bound to affect the conclusions and the recommendations. (2) and this is the main reasons: the final conclusions reached by the Commission were the result of a great many and difficult, conflicting considerations. More than once, in the course of the discussions, the scales of decision were tipped one way or the other. Elsewhere in this report we censured the shortcoming and mistakes and procrastination shown by the Israel Government in handling the problem of the "Black Hebrews".

In justification of the National Authorities one might perhaps say, that this problem - with its political, social, legal and moral aspects - is indeed one of the most difficult which the people of Israel has known, far beyond its quantitative dimensions. Therefore we kept delaying, debating and arguing, until eventually we decided what we did.

In the final analysis, beyond all other considerations, it seems that the decision taken, viz. to leave the "Black Hebrews" in Israel, to grant them recognized status, to allot them a special place where they can settle, is basically a moral, humane and Jewish decision. Its speedy implementation, despite all difficulties that may be involved, will be a mark of honor in the matriculation (maturity) certificate for the Jewish society in Israel.

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(M. RAVOR)

Remark: The report is followed by 4 appendices, which serve as

background material.

M.R.

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